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[THE DAWN OF LOVE.]

THE GIPSY PEER; OR, A SLAVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

PROLOGUE

Often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events,
And in to-day already walks to-morrow.

Coleridge.

THE dining-room of Northcliffe Hall was brilliantly lighted, the long, heavily carved table was crowded with plate, Venetian glass, and tempting viands. From the massive ormolu girandoles a hundred wax candles shed a soft, mellow light, and in his high-backed chair at the head of his table sat the earl himself.

At the end of the table sat a distant relation, Lord Mountsease, on either side were half a dozen gentlemen, neighbours and fast friends; the Marquis of Dartagle and the fox-hunting Lord Crosopold amongst them.

There were no ladies present, the Countess of Northcliffe being, for sufficient reasons hereafter explained, absent from her accustomed place as mistress of the house.

Servants, trained to minister to the wants of their betters with the precision and noiselessness of intricate mechanism, glided from guest to guest, bearing wine and food; an indescribable aroma as of some Persian perfume pervaded the apartment, and gems from ancient and modern masters glimmered in all the glory of figure, foliage and landscape from the deeply polished oaken walls.

"Gentlemen," said the earl—tall, thin, aristocratic, with a high-bred face, crowned by scanty, neatly trimmed hair of ashen shade, a pair of white fox-hunting whiskers, and a thin, cleanly cut mouth, "gentlemen, I give you the Queen."

The servants with rapidity filled the large glasses, the guests rose, raised them above their heads, then, repeating the usual formula, "To the Queen," emptied their bumpers at a draught and resumed their seats.

Conversation flowed on, accompanied by frequent bursts of laughter, in which the earl's musical, softly pitched tones could be distinctly distinguished, and bottle after bottle was honoured as if care was a stranger to each heart, and the greatest aim of life was to dine off the fat of the land at Northcliffe Hall.

But every now and then, during the pauses in the conversation, the earl's blue eyes would wander to the door in a meditating, expectant kind of way, quickly returning to the table if any of his guests regarded him, and instantly lighting into the set smile of hospitality and humour.

Presently Lord Mountsease rose and with a smile at his cousin said :

"Gentlemen, a toast—Lady Northcliffe!"

"Lady Northcliffe," repeated each as he drained his glass. "Lady Northcliffe, and may she soon be among us again."

The earl rose and glanced round the table, but before he could speak the door opened, and a dapper little gentleman with a rather red face set off by an extremely large white cravat very neatly tied entered, and came with a quick, jerky little step to his lordship's chair.

"Eh, what?" said the earl, bending down his ear, while a bright flush lit up his pale face. "What do you say, doctor?"

The doctor whispered again and drew back, rubbing his hands together with a smile of intense satisfaction.

"Gentlemen!" said the earl, drawing himself to his full height, and speaking with a clear, ringing voice, "I thank you with all my heart for your kind toast, and I will ask you, in Lady Northcliffe's name, to join with it the health and long life of her newly born child—my son and heir."

A buzz of satisfaction and congratulation ran through the room, echoed even by the sedate servants, and with cheerful alacrity every man rose to his feet.

"The son and heir! The son and heir!"

"Gentlemen, with the honours!" exclaimed the stentorian tones of Lord Dartagle, and with a musical one! two! three! and a clinking of glasses the

guests drank long life and health to the newly born heir to Northcliffe.

Up in my lady's chamber—so far from the dining-hall that not even the slightest echo could reach her—lay my lady.

A fragile flower she looked; her strong, stout-limbed little treasure lying beside her.

At the foot of the bed stood the doctor and the nurse; kneeling at the side with her arm supporting the head of the countess was a woman as young and almost as pretty as herself.

Her face, that of a robust village beauty, was redolent of sympathy and affection, and her eyes as they rested on her ladyship's white face shone with a devotion which only a woman's eyes are capable of expressing.

Presently the silence which had reigned for some ten minutes or so was broken by the countess herself.

"Marion," she said, in faint but clear tones, "you are here: always faithful."

"Always loving, my lady dear," murmured the girl, stroking the countess's white hands, upon which scintillated rare and priceless gems.

"Where—where is my boy?" asked the countess, her pale face flushing for a moment.

Marion Smeaton stretched over the bed, and, taking the tiny bundle of humanity, placed it on the mother's arm.

Lady Northcliffe looked at it with all a young wife's pride.

"And this little morsel will be an earl," she said, in a low whisper, but Marion Smeaton caught it.

"Yes, my lady, Earl of Northcliffe," she said, with a smile.

Lady Northcliffe's face suddenly assumed an expression almost of terror, and she turned her eyes away from her child as if the sight of it affected her.

"Marion," she said, "do—do you remember the old story—the old—"

"Hush!" said Marion, looking round at the doctor and nurse, who had withdrawn to a small table and were deep in conference. "Hush, my

lady dear! What should fill your mind with such nonsense as that, at such a happy moment, too?"

"Nonsense," repeated the countess, her large eyes growing larger and dreamy. "Others have not thought it nonsense. The legend has a strong foundation, Marion. The curse of Northcliffe is something more than an idle tale. Don't look at me so; invalids have fancies, you know, and I can't help thinking of it. How does it go?" and, passing her hand over her brow wearily, she murmured:

"No first-born Northcliffe e'er shall rule
Till harvest comes at Christmas yule."

Poor doggerel enough, and yet how true it has been. The earl was not a first-born. Marion; his father and his father before that were both younger brothers. Can there be anything tangible in the curse? and is this poor little, wee thing doomed to die before the title descends to him? Oh! my boy, my boy!"

Her voice, which had at first been sorrowful, now grew excited, and the doctor came with quiet, quick steps to the bed.

"Pray keep quiet, my lady. Mrs. Smeaton, do not let her ladyship agitate herself."

"My lady dear," said Marion, soothingly, "hear what the doctor says. Keep quiet and forget all that wicked rubbish. Such a fine boy as it is too! Why, I declare, he's larger than my boy already, and twice as big as Lady Dartmoor's little girl. Ah, my lady, you will be so pleased with b'—such a little fairy, but not half the size of my young lord here."

And she took the little thing from its mother's arm and peeped at its pink little face.

"Ah," said the countess, with weak eagerness, "I was forgetting your little one, Marion; you have been away from him too long; you must go to him. Marion, has—has the earl been told?"

Marion nodded with a smile.

"Ay, my lady, and right pleased he was. The doctor says he looked as proud as a king when the gentlemen drank the little one's health."

"The gentlemen?" repeated her ladyship, looking puzzled for a moment. "Oh, yes! I remember. There was a dinner party to day! How awkward, Marion. I ought not to have been ill to-day. And they drank my boy's health, did they? Long life to him, I suppose?" and inaudibly she murmured the curse again.

Then with a sigh she beckoned Marion closer, and in a whisper too low to reach the doctor's ears said:

"Marion, I have just thought of something. You—don't speak—I cannot get it out of my head! You know the ban has always been fatal hitherto. We will try to break it. I have thought of something that may do it. Marion, you shall nurse my boy! We are foster-sisters, you love me like a natural sister. Your boy and mine shall be foster-brothers! Perhaps that may avert the terrible curse! Oh, Marion, I could not let my little one die, so strong, so beautiful as he is! You shall have him, Marion, and be a second mother to him."

"But the earl, my lady?" murmured Marion, hesitatingly.

The door opened, and with a quick step the earl drew near the bed.

He was much older than his wife, but he looked almost a young man, so grandly did his happiness light up his face.

"Ethel," he said, in a tender voice, bending over the bed and kissing the white jewelled eye. "Ethel, I am so happy! Are you better? Where is my boy?"

The nurse came nearer and drew the bedclothes from the little one's face, then stepped into the shadow again.

The earl gently lifted the tiny morsel from the bed, carried it to the light and looked long and earnestly into the little face.

When he brought it back to its mother his eyes were wet with tears.

"My boy!" was all he said.

Then he stroked and kissed his young wife, and a tear fell on her forehead.

"Are you pleased, William?" murmured the countess.

He smiled. He was too pleased for words.

The countess glanced at Marion.

"Marion here says he is as big as her baby, and he is a month old."

The earl turned quickly with a kindly smile.

"Ah, Marion, I had forgotten your little one; is he all right?"

"Yes, my lord," said Marion Smeaton.

"They will be foster-brothers," said the countess, in a decided voice, that yet had a tremor in it.

"Eh?" said the earl, quickly.

"They will be foster-brothers," repeated Lady Northcliffe. "Marion is going to nurse our little one."

The earl's brow clouded for the space of a clock's tick.

"Are—are you not strong enough, my darling?" he said, tenderly, but with a shadow of reluctance.

"No," said the countess, glancing at the doctor,

who, court physician as he was, understood what was expected of him, and in smooth accents chimed in:

"No, my lord; I should advise that Lady Northcliffe give the little one to this excellent young woman. It would be safer, and—er—sm, better for her ladyship."

So it came to pass that Lady Northcliffe, yielding to the influence of a superstition, gave Earl Northcliffe's child to Marion Smeaton to nurse.

Luke Smeaton's cottage stood on the edge of Marston Moor, a bleak stretch of plain bordering the woods round Northcliffe Hall.

Luke Smeaton was Marion's husband, and in that fact alone lay his only recommendation to the good-will of his neighbours.

Marion had been Lady Northcliffe's foster-sister and the belle of the village. Swain after swain of undoubted respectability and good prospects had pleaded for her hand, but Marion had refused them all and accepted Luke, or Gipsey Smeaton as he was more generally called, who had neither respectability nor good prospects.

Marion was a noted rendezvous for the wandering gipsy tribes, and from one of the many gangs that roamed on the moor and pilfered from the homesteads in the neighbourhood Luke had sojourned, making his abode on the lonely moor and supporting himself and Marion by the proceeds of a desultory course of wood cutting and charcoal burning.

He was a tall, swarthy, dark-haired fellow, with true gipsy eyes and instincts. He did not ill-treat Marion as the villagers asserted, but he had early taught her that he expected obedience as well as affection, and that he would not brook interference even from his wife.

A few yards from his own cottage he had erected with a natural skill a rude mud hut, which was, no doubt, more picturesque than convenient. A month after his marriage an old woman, supposed to be Luke's mother, and a whilom gipsy queen, took possession of the hut and had resided there ever since, sustaining existence in the best way she could, and helped therto in no small measure by the charity of Marion and the simple villagers.

The Northcliffes preserves were stocked with game, and the keepers much troubled by poachers.

Suspicion pointed, though perhaps rather absurdly, at Luke's mother. The keepers had declared that they had seen her setting snares and wiring hares in their runs, but hitherto she had eluded all attempts at capture, and suspicion remained suspicion only.

Luke was also a black sheep in the eyes of my lord's keepers, but it would have required something superhuman to match Gipsey Luke in cunning and stealth, and he remained undetected and consequently unpunished.

Two months after the birth of the young heir Marion was seated in the best room of her cottage nursing the boy and rocking with her foot the cradle in which her own boy was sleeping.

It was early in June, and the sunset threw a crimson flame-like glare across the moor, lighting up the stumpy furze bushes upon its wide plain and pushing with crimson fingers through the fences on the outskirts.

In such a light one could see from one end of the moor to the other, and Marion, looking dreamingly into the distance, was awakened from her reverie by the appearance of a small crowd of men and horses moving up the horizon.

She rose, the baby in her arms, and went to the open door, shading her eyes with her hand that she might see more distinctly.

After a few moments the dark objects, approaching nearer, took the well-known form of a gipsy tribe, men, women, the usual crowd of half-naked children, and a string of caravans.

With a sigh—Marion disliked her husband's connexions, and never saw them without a misgiving of ill—she closed the door and resented herself.

Ten minutes passed, and then came a sharp but subdued knock at the door.

"Come in," she said, and the door opened slowly, admitting a ragged, swarthy-faced gipsy.

He nodded lazily, looked round the room with contemplative eyes, and said, in a tone of interrogation:

"Luke?"

"He is out," said Marion, speaking in a low tone that she might not disturb the child asleep in the cradle.

"Where is he?" asked the gipsy.

Marion hesitated. She knew well enough but was afraid to say.

How often had dark-eyed Luke savagely bidden her keep a still tongue in her head to every one about his movements!

"I—I don't know exactly," she said. "Do you want him?"

The man nodded.

"I don't," he said, "but Zera does."

"The queen?" said Marion, who knew that Luke would not dare to loiter when so powerful a personage required him.

"Yes," said the man. "She wants him at once. Bring him" says she. You know her, Mistress Marion."

Marion sighed and rose with a puzzled face.

"Very well," she said. "Go back and tell her my husband will come directly. I will go and find him."

The man nodded and quietly stole out again.

Marion drew the cradle from the light of the window, threw a shawl over Lady Northcliffe's boy in her arms, and, looking the door after her, run down the path to the woods. At the end she stopped and looked around, then drew a whistle from her bosom and blew it softly.

After waiting a few minutes she knocked at the hut door, and lifting the latch stepped in.

It was dimly lighted, and the old woman who rose from a seat in the corner and hobbled towards her looked weird and ghostly.

"Is it you, Marion?" she croaked.

"Yes, mother," said Marion, who addressed her so firmly probably more from respect for her age than affection. "Yes, I am looking for Luke."

"Ay," said the old woman, nodding her head.

"I've whistled twice and can't hear his answer," said Marion from the doorway. "I think he must be in the hollow among the ferns."

"Most like," said the old lady. "Who wants him?"

"Zera, the queen," replied Marion. "The tribe have just come on the moor."

"Zera," remarked Martha. "Ay, then Luke must go, he must go at once."

"He can't go at once if he doesn't know she wants him," said Marion, rather vexed. "I—I think I'll run down to the hollow and seek for him. But I can't go with the child. I should scratch its little face all to pieces," and she beat her head and kissed it.

"The child?" said Martha. "Give it to me."

"To you?" said Marion, reluctantly. "Oh, no, I won't trouble you, mother."

"Trouble!" sneered the old woman. "You're afraid, Marion Smeaton. Simple idiot: you arms have raised a hundred finer children than that. Give the child to me and find Luke; the queen will not wait."

Marion hesitated a moment, then with the suddenness of desperation laid the child in Martha's wrinkled arms and with a hasty "Take care of him, mother; it's the young lord," hurried from the hut.

Luke was not in the hollow, and, having come thus far, Marion, thinking it would be a vexatious waste of time to return without finding Luke, determined to run up to the village. He would be almost certainly at the ale-house.

On her way she ran against Doctor Walton, who, with springy little steps, was going to the Hall.

"All well?" he said, with a smile.

"Yes, thank you, sir," she said. "My own little one has been rather ailing."

"Not teething yet, surely?" said the doctor, laughingly, and Marion, echoing his laugh, ran on. Luke was at the ale-house, and Marion breathlessly delivered her message and saw him stride off towards the moor by the short cut, while she more leisurely returned to the hut.

As she neared it she fancied she heard the child crying, and quickened her steps. The door was open and she ran in, stopping short with a cry of horror as her eyes rested upon the scene within.

On the table, over which had been thrown a sheet and counterpane, lay the rigid, motionless figure of the child she had left twenty minutes before in perfect health.

Bending over it was Doctor Walton; the old woman stood at his elbow chattering like a magpie with mingled fright and excitement.

Doctor Walton sprang forward and caught her as she staggered.

"Marion! Marion!" he said, soothingly. "Be brave, be brave, my good woman. Heaven afflicts us strangely—and—er—suddenly. Come, come, be a good woman! That's right."

And he nodded encouragingly as Marion with a great effort choked back the nightmare of hysterics and, white as the child itself, drew near the table.

"How—how did it happen?" she asked, hoarsely, facing the old woman with glaring eyes.

"It was a fit," said the doctor, gravely and pitifully. "no fault of Martha's; nothing could have prevented or cured it. I happened to be passing by the foot-path and heard it cry. It died five minutes after I came in. My poor girl, don't look so scared. It is hard for you that your own little one should be taken, but you have one comfort left, you know. Lady Northcliffe's child is almost your own; you must love that and take care of that as if it was this poor little one."

Marion started and stared at the doctor, who was bending over the child, then her distraught gaze fastened on the old woman.

What she saw in the haggard, wrinkled face and twinkling eyes made her shudder.

"Doctor," she said, suddenly, "there is some mis—"

"Misfortune," croaked the hag, interrupting. "Don't be an idiot, Marion Smeaton. Other people have lost their children beside you, and not talked about special misfortunes. The baby's dead and that's an end of it. It was no fault of mine nor yours. Don't be selfish, my girl, better Luke's child than the lord's. This one," and she touched one little wax-like hand with her wrinkled finger, "this one has got clear of a deal of misery and lost a sight of trouble. If the other one had gone he'd a' lost a coronet and an earldom, and a' broken the lady's heart into the bargain."

The subtle emphasis she threw into the last words made Marion sick and giddy. They were true. If Lady Northcliffe, her dearly loved foster-sister, knew that her child, her first-born heir to Northcliffe, was lying dead on that table, would she ever recover the agony and disappointment?

No, come what might, she, Marion, could spare her the misery of such a blow. The child might have lived had she not left it with that awful, wicked old woman; it was her fault that the innocent had perished. Heaven knew! she might have—no, no, the doctor had said it could not have been prevented. The child had died by no foul means, the crime commenced with her who was trembling upon the brink of a great temptation. What should she do?

The doctor spoke and his words decided her.

"My poor girl, I think you had better take the little one home. I will go straight up to the Hall and tell her ladyship the sad news at once. Rumour flies fast, and should she hear some distorted account she may fancy that it is the young heir. Can't be too careful in such a case as hers, a sudden shock might kill her in her present weak state."

Then he wrapped the baby in the counterpane and sheet—its proper clothes lay in a heap beside the basin of hot water into which the gipsy had wisely plunged it at the first symptoms of the fit—and, placing it in Marion's arms, supported her down the path to her own cottage.

Here he left her, calm and quiet, but silent and white as a ghost; and, promising to send her a certificate of the cause of death, walked briskly away towards the Hall.

Marion laid the dead child upon the bed and threw herself upon the floor beside it, hiding her face in her hands and giving way to a tearless horror.

The young earl dead! And her child lost to her for ever. Nay, worse than lost—ruined body and soul. She had made an impostor and a cheat of him from the cradle.

The agony was almost unendurable, and, with a groan, she sprang to her feet with the intention of starting for the Hall.

The door opened at the moment, and Luke stood before her, staring at her with his savage-looking eyes extended in surprise and anger.

"Are you mad, woman?" he said, in his deep, guttural voice.

"Nearly," she said, bitterly. "Ah, Luke, Luke, look here!" and she drew him to the bed.

He muttered an oath and bent down.

"Dead!" he said, sharply; then he looked at the cradle and back at her. "Which is it?"

"The earl," said Marion, in a hoarse voice, avoiding his eye.

Luke frowned then and bit his lip.

"Bad luck doesn't always fall on a poor man," he said. "He's an old man and not likely to have another heir; the Hall will go begging," and he laughed heartily.

Marion shuddered and shrank from him.

"Dead!" he repeated. "That's bad. They'll say it's your fault, woman, and call you something like a murderer. Let's look at it. He's more like our boy than ever," and he took the child in his arms, not ungently, and scanned its peaceful face.

Suddenly he started slightly and moved nearer to the window, then he threw back his head and laughed softly, Marion regarding him with dull, vacant eyes.

"Who says the earl's got bad luck? His child can't die like other people's; it's got nine lives perhaps, like a cat. The boy's as much dead as I am."

Marion sprang towards him and snatched the child from his arms, devouring its face with her eyes and trembling in every limb.

"Put it on the bed," said Luke, pointing to the bed sternly, "and fetch me a bowl of hot water."

Trembling she obeyed. Carefully he immersed the little waxen body, and, almost as gently as Marion herself could have done, chafed its breast and throat.

Presently a shiver ran through the little frame, the eyes opened, and a faint cry escaped through the white lips.

"There," said Luke, sardonically, "I've robbed the undertaker, a personal friend. Be quiet, woman. What ails you? Why didn't you cry when you thought it was dead, not wait till it's alive again?"

"Luke, Heaven bless you!" sobbed Marion. "Oh, my heart feels as if it would burst with joy. I must go, Luke, up to the Hall and tell them."

She looked round and turned an ashen white. Behind her stood the old gipsy, the same cunning leer in her eye as that which had struck Marion with horror in the hut.

"Luke," croaked the old woman, "You've married an idiot. I've put a coronet on your boy's head, and your wife there wants to fling it off."

"What do you mean?" said Luke, roughly. "He! he!" she laughed. "The child's dead—poor Luke Smeaton's child. What a blessing it wasn't the young earl. Ho! he! he!"

Luke's gipsy face flushed and his eyes shone like diamonds.

"By Heaven, mother, you've hit it. Ha! ha! my boy shall be an earl. Luke the Gipsy's boy shall be a nobleman! Think of that, mother, and laugh like Beelzebub himself."

Marion stood for a moment staring at one and the other with fast-coming breath and horror-distended eyes.

"No, no," at last she gasped. "No trickery with the young heir, Luke! They are both alive and I'll go up to the Hall at once and explain."

She made a step to the door when Luke stretched out his hand and grasped her arm and pinned her back against the wall.

"Silence, you idiot!" he hissed, his eyes flashing close into hers. "Move a step from here till I bid you, or open your mouth half an inch now or ever, and I'll—"

He raised his fist and clenched his teeth, and no verbal threat could have been more merciless or savage. Then he snatched the child from her arms and turned to the old woman and whispered some command. She answered with sharp intelligence, and carrying the child away under her cloak left the cottage.

Luke went down to the village, quickly purchased materials for the coffin, and set to work making it.

"There is no occasion for any fuss," he said. "The child was too young for any nonsense of that sort. He could make the coffin and dig the grave, the rest the parson could do if he liked, or if he didn't he could let it alone."

So the burial service was said over the grave of Marion Smeaton's child, and Lady Northcliffe herself came down to the cottage to mourn with its bereaved mother.

CHAPTER I.

Grace was seated on his braw; Hyperion's curis; the frost of Jove himself; An eye like Mars to threaten and command; A station like the herald Morus, New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill; A combination and a form indeed. Where every god did seem to set his seal To give the world assurance of a man.

Shakespeare.

EXACTLY twenty years after the day on which Marion Smeaton succumbed to temptation and her husband's threats a beautiful girl stood in the wide embrasure of a window at Hariscourt, the seat of Lord Dartagle.

The girl was not beauty in the strictly recognized sense of the word perhaps, but there was in her well-proportioned form, graceful carriage and expressive face a charm better than a perfect regularity of feature and physical contour. In the turn of her head, the serene yet lovely calm of her dark violet eyes, nobility of blood and nature proclaimed themselves, while the fine, delicately chiselled mouth denoted a strength of mind and will that had always been the heirloom of the Dartagles since the first of the house rode full tilt at Agincourt and bore his king's enemies before his huge battle-axe as chaff flies before the keen east wind.

Hariscourt was within five miles of Northcliffe Hall, and between the families of Dartagle and Northcliffe there was a fast and warm friendship.

People did not hesitate in prophesying a love match between Lady Florence Dartagle and the Earl of Northcliffe's son, Lord Raymond Hursley; but with whatever feelings the parents on either side might have viewed such an arrangement the young people themselves had as yet given no tangible support to the rumour.

Lord Raymond, it had been said, was as yet only in love with himself, and could spare no time to give any thought tought else than his horse riding, billiard playing and wine parties. He was, unlike the present earl and most of the foregone ones, dark almost to swarthiness, with small twinkling black eyes, that underwent transmutation to fire when he was angry or sullen; he was unlike the Northcliffes in manner and nature as well as feature, being of a somewhat silent cast, always noiseless and stealthy in his gait and bearing, and so observant of any new form or fact that the intensity of his regard, expressed by closely shut lips and a shifting stare from his dark eyes, was often unpleas-

sant and frightening to visitors and new acquaintances. In fact, in face, form, voice and manner he was a striking contrast to the thin, aristocratic, bland and courteous Earl of Northcliffe and his graceful countess.

Mention has been made of the young lord's wine parties; they were frequent, often disreputable, and always noisy.

Sometimes the place of their celebration was his rooms in town, at others the village inn had served the purpose, and once the earl had yielded to his son's solicitations so far as to issue invitations to his college friends and fast acquaintances to a dinner at Northcliffe itself, but on that occasion the result had been so lamentable that the earl, for once angered with his son to the extent of passionate indignation, had declared that no such "gentlemen" were fit acquaintances for a son of Northcliffe and that they should never darken the Hall's threshold again.

The young heir was now in his twentieth year and fast approaching his majority.

Lady Florence Dartagle was a week older than he, and as yet only dimly conscious of the current rumour which pointed her out as the intended bride of the unworthy and dissolute Lord Raymond.

This June morning Lady Florence, looking through the breakfast-room window out into the depths of the Earlscourt and Northcliffe woods, was trying to arrive at a conclusion.

Should she stay and spend an hour or two in the library with her favourite poets, or take a gallop across the Earlscourt pastures and through the shadowed woods?

The brightness of the morning was tempting, and for a moment Lady Florence had almost decided to take the gallop, but she wavered again, and at last chose the library, and was moving towards the door when Lady Dartagle entered.

"My dear, I have been looking for you everywhere," she said. "Here is a letter from Lady Northcliffe. She wants us to dine there to-night."

Lady Florence's eyes dropped and a slight shade that might have been either one of annoyance or remorse passed across her brow.

"But Cousin Emilia is coming," she said.

"Yes, I know, and so was Lady Northcliffe; indeed, she asks us to bring her with us. Would you not like to go, my dear?"

"Would you, mamma?" asked Florence, evading the question.

"Yes, I should," replied her ladyship. "I think it would be a nice change for Emilia, and your father likes a dinner at the Hall."

"Then let us go," said Lady Florence, making a movement towards the door.

Lady Dartagle stopped her.

"Where are you going, Florence? Lord Raymond is in the library looking at your father's new fishing-rod."

"I was going to the library," replied Lady Florence. "But I will order Turquoise, I think."

"You will stay and see Lord Raymond?" asked Lady Dartagle.

"I think not, mamma, if you do not mind," answered the girl. "I have a little headache, and would rather not."

The countess's forehead contracted the slightest in the world, and as she laid the letter on the table her fingers tapped it thoughtfully.

What did Florence's avoidance of Lord Raymond mean? Did she dislike him, or was it but the result of love's shyness?

"Very well, my dear Florence," she said, aloud, in her kindest manner. "Do not wait if you would rather not. I daresay he will not come into the drawing-room. Will you take John with you?"

"No, mamma," said Lady Florence. "I shall not leave the park," and with a little smiling nod of affectionate farewell she left the room.

Ten minutes afterwards Lord Raymond, entering the drawing-room, had the pleasure or perhaps mortification, of seeing her graceful form disappear in the shadow of the first row of elms, and in his low, thick voice he said:

"Is not that Lady Florence riding away there?"

"Eh?" said Lord Dartagle, moving to the window and peering out. "I don't know."

"Yes, it is," said the countess, blandly. "She had a bad headache and begged me to give you her kindest remembrances, Raymond."

Lord Raymond made no reply, but continued looking from the window for a few moments, his face completely hidden from the earl and countess, who did not see the dark, evil frown of jealousy and wounded self love that distorted it. When he turned to them it had entirely disappeared, and its set observant smile was there as usual.

"Well, how is it to be to-night? I hope you are coming. My mother will be terribly cut up if you refuse."

"We will be most happy to come, and will bring Miss Slada with us," said the countess.

"Very well," he replied. "Then we shall see you at eight. Good-bye, my lord; good-bye, Lady

Darteagle;" and, with a glint from his dark eyes, he left the room, stroking—not slapping—in a stealthy way his well-cut trousers. His horse, a black thoroughbred, with the strength of a charger and the capability of a racer, stood pawing the ground and fretting in the hands of a groom. He sprang on its back and struck his spurs into the sleek sides with something like an oath.

"Do you see him?" said the groom, with an air of disgust, to a stable help. "That's his way. Those spurs are an inch and a half deep, and the horse's side is scored with 'em. I call it low-bred and vicious!"

Lord Raymond administered the spurs unmercifully, and as the tortured horse tore over the meads he muttered:

"Confound her for a proud, haughty jade; but I'll bring her down; I'll teach her that she can't insult the heir of Northcliffe with impunity;" and with the dark, sinister frown overshadowing his face like a sultry thunder cloud his lordship did not draw rein till the horse, panting and fevered, brought him to the stone steps of Northcliffe Hall.

Meanwhile Lady Florence, with a thankfulness in her heart, which she did not express in words even to herself, that she had thus far escaped an interview with Lord Raymond, rode, with no spurs and with the tiniest of whips, her pretty palfrey into the cool woods.

It was a beautiful morning and one admirably suited to the girl's peculiar mood.

She liked solitude when it was beautiful and poetic; her mind was so well stored that she could fall upon her own resources and find something better than the bitterness of ennui which generally assails those who seek amusement in themselves.

As she rode through the tangle brake, among the music of the birds and the soothings of the full-leaved trees, her heart gave out a music in full harmony with the fresh nature about her, and she forgot the dark Lord Raymond, her headache—ay, even herself.

From her reverie, however, she was roused pretty suddenly. Turquoise, the beautiful and timid, at a curve in the narrow bridle-path swerved hastily aside and rose on its haunches.

Lady Florence tightened the rein in a second, and, soothing the animal, looked round for the rabbit or hare which she imagined had been the cause of its alarm.

But instead of the harmless quadrupeds of the woods she saw something very different.

Right before her—indeed so directly in her path that had not Turquoise swerved round its daintily shod fore-hoofs would have been planted on his face—lay the outstretched figure of a man.

Lady Florence, looking down, saw that he was young, of a stalwart, graceful form, handsome, with golden hair and a face that would have been fair but for its tan, and asleep.

An open book had fallen from his hand—a long thin and bronzed one—and his cap, a sort of kepi composed of scarlet cloth and some kind of fur, lay beside it, revealing the dark masses of golden hair and the smooth, handsome forehead.

Lady Florence's first impulse was one of anger.

The Earls court woods were strictly preserved.

Lord Darteagle's keepers followed up their persecutions of trespassers with the utmost rigour; and this was the first time Lady Florence had ever met a stranger in her solitary rides through the estate.

Anger and indignation unmistakable lit up her dark eyes, and in a voice that, though losing nothing of its music, was haughty almost to sternness, she said:

"Do you know you are trespassing, sir?"

The sleeper opened a pair of soft, melancholy brown eyes, looked about with that dazed air which eyes wear when they return from the visions of dreamland, and started to his feet.

There was so much of grace and unconscious dignity in the movement and the accompanying bow that Lady Florence paused a moment ere she repeated in a quieter tone her question.

"Trespassing?" repeated the stranger, in a deep, clear voice, with a mournfulness in the tone which harmonized with the expression of his eyes. "Indeed, no, madam. I came with my book to find a shady spot and unwittingly entered these woods."

"You are trespassing. You must have climbed the fence," said Lady Florence.

"Ay," said the man, with something like a start; "I had forgotten. There was a fence, and I leaped it. Believe me I had forgotten it, madam."

The last part of the sentence was so gravely earnest that Lady Florence again paused.

"There are plenty of boards against the trees and fences warning trespassers," she said, "and you cannot argue as an excuse that you cannot read."

And she glanced at the open book.

He picked it up and closed it.

"No, madam," he said, "I do not wish to make such an excuse. I did not see the boards. But, ex-

use or none, I'm trespassing, and I beg your pardon."

He bowed again, a cold, respectful inclination of the head, and donning his cap turned as if to leave her.

"Stop!" said Lady Florence, suspiciously. "What is your name?"

"Tazoni," he answered, stopping as she had bidden him, and looking up at her with his left hand resting on his side, looking like a Spanish Hidalgo in the disguise of an English gamekeeper.

"Tazoni?" she repeated. "Where do you come from—where do you live?"

"North, east, south, and west," replied the man, his lips parting slightly with a smile. "I live at present on the moor yonder," and he waved his hand towards the common waste.

"You are a gipsy then?" said Lady Florence, relapsing into something like an astonished reverie.

The figure, the face, the voice were all distinctly unlike those she had met in gipsy encampments.

"I am, madam," he replied.

Lady Florence gathered up her bridle, which she had let fall on the horse's neck during the catechism, and settled herself upon her seat.

"Well," she said, "you cannot plead ignorance of your offence any longer. Do not repeat it. The earl, my father, dislikes gipsies; you have done his property great and wilful injury—"

The man—to her mingled indignation and astonishment—interrupted her with a commanding gesture.

"Pardon me, lady; when you say 'you,' meaning all of our race, you commit the injustice of condemning a whole class for the sins of a few of its members. The tribe over which I, Tazoni, rule never injured your father's or any other man's property. We neither steal nor destroy—as yet; though man's cruelty and injustice—of which latter you have just given me an instance—may compel us in our own defence to do either or both in time. Therefore, having, as yet, done you no injury, save the unwitting one of having trodden upon your grass for the space of an hour, you have no right to thrust your hatred and contempt in our face. Lady, do not forget that though we are gipsies we are still men and—alas! for your pride—your brothers."

So saying he made a majestic bow and walked swiftly away.

For a moment Lady Florence, daughter of the Right Honourable Earl of Darteagle and heiress of thirty thousand per annum and the princely Earls court, sat motionless and almost as white as a statue.

She had been lectured and reproved by a gipsy! At last, with a short, astonished laugh of vexation, she turned Turquoise's head and put him to a gallop.

"Am I dreaming or are the days of romance come back to us?" she exclaimed, addressing the birds and the trees. "One or the other assuredly, for most certainly I have been tête-à-tête with a gipsy king."

(To be continued.)

We let people abuse the climate of England when we ought to cast this in their teeth. England, according to statistics, is the healthiest country of Europe. To wit, the annual rates of mortality per 1,000 late in 18 English towns were from 15 to 28. In London the annual death-rate declined then to 18, a lower rate than has prevailed in any previous week this year. In Calcutta the deaths were equal to an annual death-rate of 34 per 1,000; in Bombay 26 per 1,000; in Madras 40 per 1,000; in Paris 23 per 1,000; in Brussels 19 per 1,000; in Amsterdam 24 per 1,000; in Berlin 37; in Breslau 29; in Munich 38; in Vienna 26; and in Turin 33.

DISCOVERY AT DURHAM CATHEDRAL.—The excavations being made on the site of the chapter-house almost daily bring to light relics of mediæval interments. The other day an extraordinary discovery was made in the centre of the chapter-house, a few feet below the original floor, in the shape of a stone coffin, covered by a slab, but without inscription to lead to identification. With some difficulty the workmen raised the lid, in the presence of the Dean, the Rev. W. Greenwell, the Rev. J. Hornsby (the historian), and several gentlemen. In the coffin was found the almost perfect skeleton of a woman, about four feet six inches in length, which appeared to have been wrapped in linen, traces of which remained.

NO PLACE.—There is always a place for every one and one more, if the person who wants a place will adapt himself to the circumstances of the case, and fit for the position. Most young men want more than their services are worth to the person employing them. If you can't get the place you want, instead of waiting for a vacancy, don't waste a day, not an hour, because by so doing you are wasting your resources; better take a position which only

pays board—discharge promptly, well, and faithfully the duties of that position, and one of two things will be the inevitable result, almost always—your employer will either increase your wages for that work or will put you up higher. All that you have to do is to perform your duties so well that he will feel he cannot conveniently do without you; for wages take what you can get, and with promptitude, fidelity, thoroughness and integrity, you will, sooner or later, command your price. Be willing to lend a hand to anything connected with the business; show as much interest in it as if it were your own, and in most cases you will become a partner in the concern.

IN JUNE.

AGAIN the regal June puts on
Her garniture of pride,
And insignia of royalty—

The roses of a bride;
Again her teeming wealth of sweets
In flowerly pomp unfold,
In her triumphal path is spread
The sunshine's cloth of gold.

Another year—another sweep
Of that vast, tireless wing
That bears the world through storm and
calm

From radiant spring to spring,
Along her shining pathway, hung
Auid the circling spheres,
Since first the sons of morning sang
The birth-song of the years!

Another year—another arc
Of that great circle sped,
That marries with its mystic ring
The living to the dead—
The living present, the dead past,
Whose fruitful heritages
Of deathless names keep green for aye
The record of the ages.

The present, fired with zeal to win
Some nobler fate that lies
Beyond the yet unconquered heights
Of glory's fair emprise;
The past, that saw in mighty dreams,
And visions of her youth,
The world-wide apotheosis
Of liberty and truth!

Truth, the calm-eyed, inscrutable,
Whose patient courage yields
The two-edged sword of press and pen,
Till vanquished error yields,
And gives—to earth's remotest round
Her beacon-flag unfurled—
Untrammeled liberty of thought
And speech to all the world.

A kingly aim, the emulous years,
Since the long race begun,
Have strained each glorious nerve to win,
And died—the goal unwon;
For ever Giant Ignorance haunts
The toiling athlete's track,
To clog the golden wheels, and drag
The car of progress back.

Still shines the goal, with beckoning towers
That pierce unclouded skies,
Its fairy domes and minarets
In starry splendour rise.
Toward its golden-gated gates,
With faith that never tires,
Through gloom and storm, through sun
and rain,
The living age aspires.

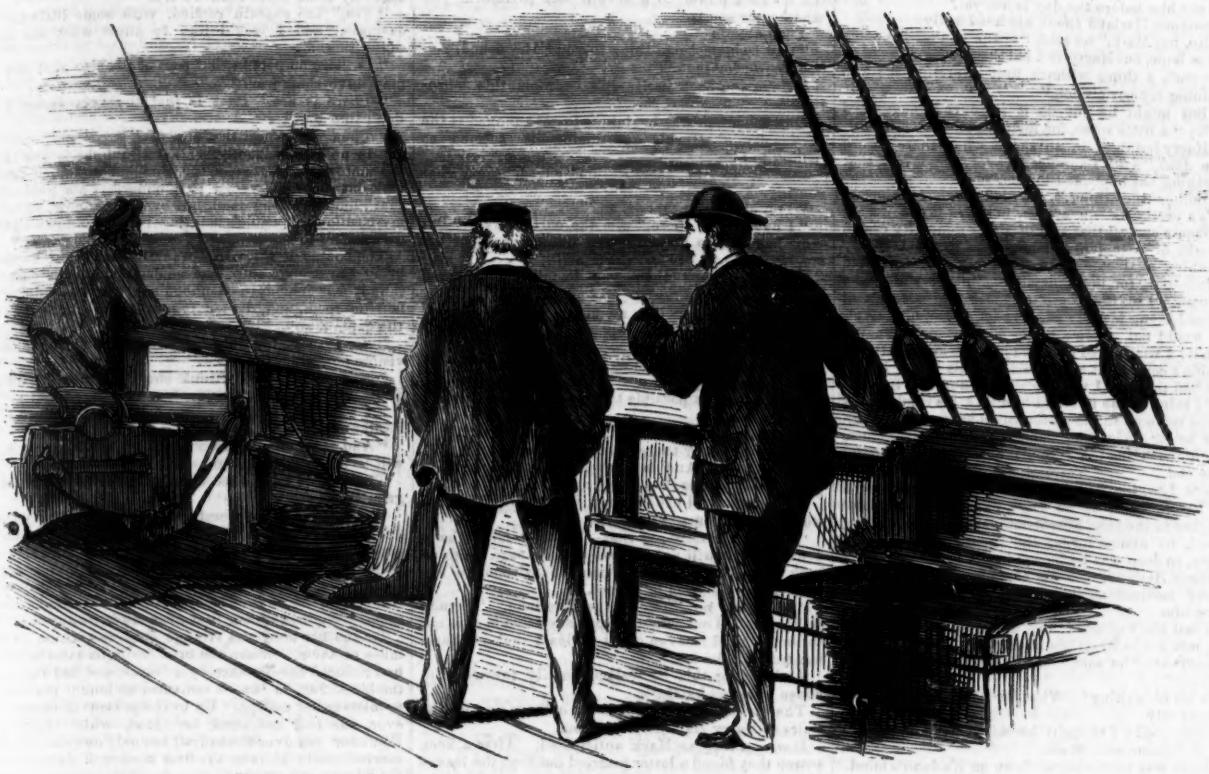
The dauntless march of human thought
Holds her unswerving way,
From height to height, flushed with the
dawn

Of an eternal day—
Where, bearing in his hand the Book
Of Mysterious unsealed,
The mighty Future standeth in
The light of truth revealed!

E. A. B.

A very beautiful silver coin of the Emperor Severus was found in Malton, closely adjoining the Roman Camp, the other day.

A couple of young boar-fish—so called from the peculiar formation of the head and snout—were recently forwarded to Brighton from Mevagissey, Cornwall, by Mr. Matthias Dunn, a gentleman who, on previous occasions, has shown a lively and practical interest in the Aquarium. Amongst other novel features are a juvenile crocodile, a couple of dozen salamanders, an American river turtle and a nest of cuttle fish. The crocodile comes from the Nile; it is 2 ft. 9 in. long; and it may be seen daily in a table tank in the neighbourhood of the conservatory.



[THE CHASE.]

SILVERSTONE'S HEIR;

or,

THE MYSTERY OF BLACKROCK TOWER.

CHAPTER XV.

Would I were dead, if Heav'n's goodwill were

so,

For what is in this world but grief and woe ?

Shakespeare.

The morning following the death of Mrs. Delarome was one of unusual excitement in Silverstone. It was not often a death took place there, and in this case the blow was utterly unexpected; the late Mrs. Delarome had been hitherto considered a woman of the soundest health and the most vigorous constitution. Her illness had not lasted twenty-four hours altogether, and her death had been so sudden as to occasion the utmost consternation amongst her friends.

So great was the respect entertained for the deceased widow that there was no work done at all that day in the village.

The fishing craft lay idle at anchor in the bay; their owners were knotted here and there in little groups, discussing in sad accents the mournful event, which fell like a pall of gloom over the village.

The morning was dull and cheerless. No sun shone down; huge clouds hung like black shrouds in the heavens; and not the rustle of a breeze refreshed the close and murky atmosphere. The waters of the bay were as smooth as glass, but dark and ominous withal, while a few sea-birds gyrated languidly above them.

But besides the death of Mrs. Delarome there was farther cause for excitement in the village. Harry Harland had disappeared, and all inquiries had been made in vain for him.

No one in fact had seen the young fisherman since the preceding night, and why he should have disappeared was a mystery which no one seemed able to unravel.

We are wrong. There was at least one in Silverstone who knew where Harry Harland had gone, and that one was Mark.

While the fishermen were assembled in little groups discussing the events of the past twenty-four hours Mark Langton was alone walking uneasily up and down the beach, his hands locked behind him, his sharp features clouded in gloomy thought.

So much was every one taken up with their own sad speculations that no one seemed to observe him.

"I wish I was a hundred miles away from here," thought Mark, dejectedly. "I don't see how I can

face Laurence Harland with this miserable secret weighing so heavily on me. It's a bad piece of work from first to last, and all my fault, too, for giving the young man money. It was done in a foolish moment of generosity, I admit, but still it was a temptation. Yet who could ever think he would leave in that way, without even giving an inkling to his people? It would have been the least he could have done at any rate to have left a few written lines—perhaps he has; if so, I'll be very glad of them. Humph! what a strange world we live in."

And old Mark as he said this strode up and down the beach with a more excited step.

During that walk the old man thought two or three times of disclosing to Laurence Harland all he knew concerning his son's disappearance, but after a few moments' anxious reflection he thought he had better not.

While he was thus swayed betwixt conscientious scruples and the gloominess of his own reflections Laurence Harland emerged from his cottage. The fisherman was bowed and downcast in his looks, and his steps had not the springing elasticity which usually characterized them. He came forward slowly, passing the little knots of fishermen without so much as speaking a word to them.

He struck directly for that part of the beach over which Mark was pacing. Mark saw him, paused in his walk, and scanned his approaching form with a look of mingled pain and uneasiness.

"He seems to have grown ten years older," thought the old man. "And have I then to play the hypocrite and pretend to have no knowledge of the true cause of his sorrow?"

It became a hard struggle with him whether he should or not disclose all he knew of the matter.

"No, no," he thought to himself. "If I tell him now he'll think I am the biggest hypocrite that walks the earth. I will not tell him; he'll find it out presently for himself."

Mark composed his excited feelings as well as he could and awaited with a beating heart the slow approach of the fisherman.

At last Laurence Harland came up, his face haggard and his eyes bloodshot, and though Mark felt his heart shudder at the sight, he viewed his approach with seeming indifference, yet with evident surprise at the almost unearthly aspect of his countenance.

"What's gone wrong with you, friend Harland?" said Mark, trying to steady his voice and still the beating of his heart. "You look unwell."

"Do I?" the fisherman said, mechanically. "Perhaps there is something to make me so, friend."

"To be sure—to be sure," replied Mark, in a tone

of apparent sympathy. "I can well understand all that. To lose so near and good a neighbour as Mrs. Delarome."

Laurence Harland looked up; the tears stood trembling in his eyes.

"True, Mark," he faltered out, "it was a sad and unexpected blow. But I have something else to trouble me besides that."

"Indeed!" said Mark; "I am very sorry to hear it."

"My son Harry has gone, Mark, and I fear——"

"What!" interrupted Mark, with a cry of astonishment. "Has anything befallen Harry Harland? Speak—tell me!"

This was not very bad acting for Langton, yet he could scarce restrain a certain amount of disgust at the deceitful part he was playing.

"Speak, Laurence Harland!" he cried again. "Has anything befallen your son?"

"Have you not heard that he has most unaccountably disappeared?" asked Harland, with a look of surprise.

"Well," stammered Mark, "I certainly was told he was away from the village; that was all. But he will doubtless return in the course of the day."

"I fear it," said Laurence, gloomily. "Something has happened to the boy, Mark."

"How long has he been away?"

"Since last evening."

"Was he not out at the fishing with you?"

"No."

"Well, that's certainly strange," mused Mark. "I heard he was."

"Whoever said so made a mistake," said the fisherman, "I and John waited at anchor a full half-hour for him; he didn't come, so we went to the grounds alone."

Mark walked up and down the beach to quiet his emotion. He found it next to an impossibility to look into that haggard face and bloodshot eyes without experiencing a tinge of the deepest remorse. His duplicity was becoming each instant more irksome and unbearable to him. And yet he must still continue to act as if he knew nothing. Bitterly did he now regret that he had not warned Laurence Harland of his son's intended departure before. But regrets were useless now; he therefore resolved to abide the consequence of his pretended ignorance.

"I must say something," he thought, "or he'll imagine I know more of the matter than I am supposed to. I am sorry indeed, but it's too late now to make a clean breast of it. You may depend, Mr. Harland," he said, aloud, and with affected composure, "that Harry is all right. It is most likely he

has gone to one of the villages, and, rely on it, you will see him before the day is out yet."

Laurence Harland shook his head sadly.

"No, no, Mark," he said, "thank you all the same for the hope, but Harry is a lad that would never have done such a thing without first informing me and obtaining my permission."

"But might he not do it for once?" suggested Mark; "a little spree, for instance?"

"Harry indulges in no spree when there's work to be done," said Laurence, gravely. "I fear that something has happened to him."

"Bother the thing," growled Mark to himself. "It's a pretty fix we are in, surely. Romantic attachments and all that sort of thing generally create a world of mischief. I should be inclined to my something against Marian—the way she has jilted the lad—only for the unhappy position in which she is placed. I see it's no use to reason Laurence out of his headstrong ideas. As if a young fellow of Harry's age would not go on a bit of a spree occasionally. Dash it! I wish I had not given him the money; then I shouldn't consider it a temptation in his way. Hum! it's a bad thing! I wonder what Laurence Harland would think of me if I told him all? He would think me the meanest and most foolish old scoundrel living. It is better to let him remain in ignorance than to have him imagine that. So I'll continue my dignity to the end."

Mark Langton had begun to walk up and down the beach again as he gave expression to these thoughts in the most absent-minded manner possible. Indeed, he almost forgot the presence of his companion, so deep was he buried in his reflections; and Laurence Harland, too, was so engrossed in his own gloomy meditations that he scarcely appeared to notice him.

At last Mark stopped, and, going up to the fisherman, laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Laurence," he said, "did he not leave a bit of writing?"

"A bit of writing! What for?" asked the other, astonished.

"Well, well; I thought he might have done, that was all," stammered Mark.

A light was beginning to dawn on Harland's mind. Did Mark dream for an instant that his son had left him? He would put the question.

"What put that into your head, Mark?" he said. "Do you think Harry has gone from me, then?"

The words trembled on his lips.

"He might," Mark replied, simply. "He is not the first young man who has left his home through some cause or other."

And Mark Langton averted his eyes as he said it. "What do you mean?" demanded Laurence Harland, with some sternness.

Mark grew perceptibly uneasier beneath the searching glances that were bent on him; but he summoned up sufficient resolution nevertheless to answer the question put to him.

"You see, friend Laurence," he went on, "that a young and sensitive man may leave home through various causes. Now, for instance, a few angry words would—"

"Would what?"

"Influence Harry to leave Silverstone."

"An angry word I never had with him," returned the fisherman, "and I am happy to state there was never occasion for it either. Harry has been as good a lad as ever lived—I am proud to think it, nor could a son behave with greater respect to a father."

Here the old man's eyes were suffused in tears.

"Might there not be some other cause?" asked Mark, who each instant more profoundly detested the part he was playing.

The fisherman, without answering him, seemed buried for a few moments in deep thought. He racked his mind in vain for a plausible pretext that night occasion his son's leaving home, but he was at length obliged to confess to himself that he could not discover any.

"I can think of nothing," he said, at last, "that would make Harry act so unreasonably. Perhaps you can, if so I would be obliged to you to tell me."

But Mark, though invited, gave no reason for his suggestion.

"He might have gone to Blackrock," he said, evasively.

The words brought a cloud of the deepest gloom into the fisherman's face, but hastily recovering himself, he said:

"But you were there last night yourself?"

"True."

"And Doctor Philander accompanied you to the village?"

"That's true also."

"Then he can't be there or we should have known it. However, I'll start off at once and see Doctor Philander myself, and if he has any information to give he'll impart it to me."

"I think," said Mark, to himself, "that it will put the doctor's power to a severe test to inform you where your son is."

Then aloud:

"Can I suggest one thing to you?" he asked.

"Yes—what is it?"

"Have you been in Harry's bedroom this morning?"

The fisherman was beginning to get annoyed at the pertinacity of Mark's questioning—it seemed so trifling to him.

"What to do there?" he asked, somewhat sharply.

"You have been there then?"

"I have been there," was the curt reply. "But what has that to do with the disappearance of my son?"

"More perhaps than you imagine," answered Mark.

"Your words are like so many pencils to me," said Harland, with some degree of contempt. "Come to the point at once and speak plainly."

"Well, then, I'll speak as plainly as I can. If you had snatched in your son's bedroom?" Mark went on, "it might be just possible that you would have found a letter there."

Laurence Harland uttered a quick, sharp cry.

"Found a letter there!" he exclaimed.

"Precisely. And in that letter an explanation possibly of your son's strange absence."

"Then you still believe that Harry has left Silverstone?" said Laurence Harland.

"I do not exactly say that—I may he might have done. But it will do us harm to make sure by going back to the house and examining the bedroom to see if anything has been left there."

"Assuredly not," replied the fisherman. "Come; we'll soon find out whether your suspicion is or is not correct. Kind Heaven grant at least that no harm has befallen the lad."

And saying this he walked hastily towards the house followed by Mark.

They presently passed into the cottage and up the stairs to Harry Harland's bedroom.

It was exactly as Mark anticipated. After a keen search they found a letter inserted between the leaves of an old book.

Laurence Harland took out the note with a trembling hand, tore open the envelope, and after perusing half its contents fell senseless to the floor.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ye gentlemen of England
That live at home at ease,
Ah! little do you think upon
The dangers of the seas.

Martyn Parker.

AND now to follow the fortunes of Stanhope Bainbridge.

The young squire, after his sudden disappearance from Silverstone, shipped on board the good ship "Nightingale," commanded by Captain Faulkner and bound for the Coast of Mexico.

Stanhope, before he had been many weeks on the ocean, had, in a measure, recovered all his former cheerfulness. This, no doubt, was owing to the inspiring influence of the sea, and not a little to the excellent companionship of Captain Faulkner, who at all times treated him with the greatest consideration and respect, besides taking every possible opportunity of encouraging him with words of hope and cheerfulness.

Stanhope scarcely ever mentioned the name of Marian Delarne now. But if he had not, he loved her all the more, and many a time he sighed that he could not be near to console and cheer her.

One day, close approaching the afternoon, Stanhope heard Faulkner's voice calling him to come on deck, and he instantly hurried up the companion-way.

"Look!" the captain cried, when he had reached his side. "I think I can discern land. Take the glass, and see if you can make out anything in that direction—nor' by nor'-west."

Stanhope took the instrument in his hand, and adjusted it to his eye, but after looking for some time in the direction indicated he handed it back again, saying that he saw nothing.

"I thought I caught a sight of land. I am almost positive I did," the captain said, looking again through the glass. "Hum! I can't very plainly make it out. I will get into the maintop, where I can see better."

In a few seconds he was in the rigging, scanning the distant horizon attentively. When he had satisfied himself he shouted for Stanhope to join him.

"It is land," he said, when the latter had reached the masthead. "Take a look now, and see if you cannot see it, and something else besides."

Stanhope did as he was directed, and could plainly discern the land; and as he returned the glass to Faulkner he said:

"It seems to me that there is a ship closer in shore by some miles than we are."

"Yes," the captain replied, with some little uneasiness, "and I would like to know what she is doing there."

"Is there no port in that part of Mexico that she may have come from?"

"There is not. That is just the very reason I don't like her."

"Then you expect that she—"

"Is no good—exactly. I am afraid she is one of the notorious pirates of the Spanish main, on the lookout for some vessel to plunder. I am glad of that glimpse of the land, however, as I now know my position to a cable's length. I must go down and give orders to the helmsman to keep the brig away."

The course of the vessel was so shaped now as to bring the strange ship dead astern; but in a short time it was evident to Stanhope that she was gaining fast on them, and, descending to the deck, he told the captain so.

"So I see," the latter replied. "She is quite visible now from the deck."

"And do you really think she's a pirate?" said Stanhope, with some trepidation.

"I fear there is not much room to doubt it," Faulkner replied.

"And what do you propose doing? I suppose it will be almost out of the question to fight her?"

The captain looked at him for a moment with a grim smile.

"If it come to the worst, Mr. Bainbridge," he said, "it will be as well to fight as to surrender. We can expect no quarter from her—only on us. And now resume the duty of either fighting or giving her the ship. Perhaps we may manage the latter; it only wants two hours to dark, and we may yet elude them. We will do our best towards it, at any rate."

In another hour the strange ship was within two miles of them. When the brief twilight came she had reduced the distance by a fourth, and had run up the black flag, so that it remained no longer possible to mistake her calling. Up to the present time, however, she had not tried her guns, while Captain Faulkner ran over the taffrail the only one his vessel carried, ready to take the first chance of damaging his adversary's rigging.

The breeze still luckily held good, giving them an excellent chance of clapping on every stitch of canvas. Nothing more could be done; the crew awaited anxiously, but silently, the issue of the race. In a short time the pirate's vessel was observed to fall off a point or two.

"I see," said Faulkner, uneasily, "they are going to try their barkers on us."

Hardly had the words left his lips when a puff of smoke was observed from the pirate's bows, and a shot struck the water not over a hundred yards from the brig's stern.

The firing of this shot had to a certain extent impeded the progress of the strange craft, while, on the other hand, it had of course given a slight advantage to the brig. Darkness, too, was beginning to fall, a circumstance which in some measure raised the captain's hopes of escaping his much-dreaded pursuer. Meantime, the sky in the north-east began to be overcast by a heavy black cloud, indicating one of those sudden changes of weather so common in the tropics.

"We shall have a heavy squall presently," said Captain Faulkner, scanning the overcast sky critically. "That black cloud means something of a blow, and fortunately the pirate will feel the effects of it long before it reaches us. He will require to shorten sail and that immediately."

As he ceased speaking he gave orders for the men to be stationed at the various yards, in readiness to let them go when the signal was given.

Still the pursuing craft kept on her course with every stitch of canvas that she could carry, apparently regardless of the approaching squall in her anxiety lest the swiftly coming night would enable her prey to escape.

She had got to within three-quarters of a mile of the brig when Faulkner exclaimed to his companion:

"They are surely mad! See, the squall is on them; the white water is close under their weather-rail."

"They are bestirring themselves now though," said Stanhope, straining his eyes through the gloom in the direction of the approaching pirate.

And as he spoke the upper yards of the pursuing vessel fell upon the caps in time to save the spars, but not in time, though, to have the royal and top-gallant sails secured, for these were blown into ribbons by the terrific gusts that burst upon them.

"That is just the chance we wanted," said Faulkner, excitedly. "Hurrah! But the squall will be on us in less than five minutes; we must not be caught napping as they were."

He turned instantly to give orders to let go the halyards of the top-gallants and royals. In a moment all was activity on the "Nightingale," and the sail reduced in an incredibly brief time; but not a moment too soon, for the squall came roaring upon them, burying the figure-head of the stout brig in the angry trough of the sea.

With the squall came an almost impenetrable darkness, shutting out from view the pirate vessel, to the great delight of the "Nightingale's" crew. Torrents of rain poured down in great fury, and the black heavens were lit up by the most vivid and blinding flashes of lightning, while roll after roll of loud thunder crashed deafeningly upon the ear.

Topsails were with difficulty reefed and the brig paid before the wind.

For nearly an hour they kept on their way amid white-crested waves, pelting rain, and terrific thunder and lightning. At every flash that burst through the murkiness of the heavens Captain Faulkner and Stanhope Bainbridge looked anxiously in the direction where they had last seen the pirate. But, to their great relief, she was no longer visible, and they justly believed, since they could not themselves make her out, that they would be equally invisible to those on board of her.

In about another hour the rain began to abate and the wind to go down. The reefs were shaken out of the topsails, and the jib and topgallant sails set.

As the murky darkness cleared away the most diligent search failed to reveal anything of their late pursuer, and Captain Faulkner so changed his course as to make it almost impossible to fall in with it again.

"That was a terrific squall," said Faulkner, as they again walked the deck, "but not the first by a good many I have been in; yet I confess I never saw one that gave me so much pleasure. Thanks to it, we escaped a most perilous position, which gave me more anxiety than I cared to acknowledge."

"I thought you did not look particularly confident," said Stanhope, smiling; "and I don't suppose we could have effected a very vigorous resistance if the pirates had succeeded in grappling with us."

"No, indeed," replied the captain. "But now we are safe, and I make it a point never to trouble myself with contingencies which might have arisen but which did not occur."

At this they both laughed.

"I wonder how they have got on with the squall?" said Stanhope. "They must have had some hard work in getting in their torn canvas."

"Not a bit. They are used to such occurrences, for they are always cruising near the Gulf. They would not be long in getting new sails bent. I don't know, though, that we should have got off so easily if they had their canvas snug in time. I never saw sail torn with more joy in my life."

"Are such squalls common in the Gulf?" asked Bainbridge.

"Very; I have seen them occur twice and even three times in the course of the day."

"It must be very precarious navigation."

"Well, sailors who know the Gulf are not often caught in them," replied Faulkner, laughing. "And there is this peculiarity about them, they are either very partial or local. You will sometimes be becalmed, while within half a mile of you the sea will be boiling from the effects of a squall. I remember on one occasion when I was coming to Vera Cruz, that I should have been glad of even such a squall as we have just experienced. We had been lying becalmed for some time and near the middle of the Gulf, with another ship in the same predicament about a couple of miles to eastward of us, when one afternoon the clouds began to gather in the north, and we were in hopes it would result in a breeze. A short time afterwards one of my men called my attention to an object about twelve miles right astern of us. I knew at a glance what it was, as it was not the first occasion by many that I had seen the same thing. It was in fact, a waterspout travelling rapidly towards us. For some time I felt no anxiety respecting it, as I had never before seen any of them travel a very great distance without breaking. But when it came within three miles of my ship without showing any diminution I felt some concern and heartily wished for a breeze that might enable us to get out of the way. I looked eastward towards the ship that was lying so long becalmed, and found that she was filling away under a top-gallant breeze, while the water around our craft was still calm and unruled. Still the waterspout rapidly advanced, roaring with the noise of a cataract, while the fine breeze, the effect of which we could mark on the sea, and which would have easily enabled us to get out of the way, kept a mile to eastward of us. I was getting very anxious. On came the waterspout to within a mile of us, when, to my great joy, it broke, and so ended my anxiety and danger at the same moment. I can tell you I seldom envied any ship a breeze so much as I did the one eastward of us."

"Your escape was most wonderful," said Stanhope, who had hung breathlessly on his words. "It must be very trying to see what seems to be certain destruction approaching one, while one's entirely powerless to either avert or escape it."

"That is indeed true," replied the captain. "It is a very different thing from being in the thick of a fight, for although death may be busy around you, the activity and bustle keep the mind from dwelling upon it, and so long as you are busy with your arms you have always the hope of effectual resistance."

"That I can easily imagine. But it is getting late now and I will turn in," and Stanhope, bidding "good-night" to his friend Faulkner, left the deck and was very soon in a sound sleep.

One morning, a few days after the squall we have just described, Stanhope came up the companion-way, to find the vessel heading right for the shore, which was visible at a distance of about eight miles.

The coast they were approaching was low and flat, and as far inland as the eye could see there was no appearance of hills or mountains. The wind was very light and the brig made but slow progress.

As they neared the coast Stanhope soon discovered that the land was well wooded almost down to the water's edge, and when the sun shone on the varied colours of the luxuriant foliage he was certainly not disappointed at the picture he had drawn in his imagination of tropical scenery.

"Well, are you pleased with your first view of Mexico?" asked the captain.

"Very much indeed," replied Stanhope, "I never beheld a more lovely scene in my life."

"Ah! that comes of passing all your days in England," said the other, laughing. "Although I am sometimes inclined to think that you will see as beautiful scenery in England as in the world, though, I'll admit, not with the advantages of so salubrious a climate."

"That makes all the difference. Is not this dreamy, luxuriant climate the only one fitted to surround a wealth of lovely colours such as we now see?"

"You are no doubt quite right," the captain said. "But it's a great pity that this dreamy, luxuriant climate as you call it should be the bethed of such troublesome customers as fever, ague, and Yellow Jack."

"Well, every land has its disadvantages as well as its advantages," said Stanhope. "But, with your leave, I would rather forget the former for the present and enjoy the beauty of the scene undisturbed by such thoughts as they suggest."

A little before noon they cast anchor about a mile from the shore, opposite to a pretty wide river, which emptied its waters into the sea. The shore was, to all appearance, entirely destitute of houses. They had not been anchored long, however, when a boat, with four men seated in it, was observed pulling towards them from the shore. In a very short time the four men boarded the brig.

Stanhope was very much interested in the appearance of the new-comers. Two of the men, who had acted as the propellers of the boat, were very scantly attired, and wore broad straw hats. They were very mild, dark-skinned, and much more intelligent-looking than he had expected to find in the natives of Mexico, whom he had previously been accustomed to associate in his mind as little better than savages. The third of the party was rather better attired than the first two, and the fourth, evidently the chief, was rigged up in an old uniform. This latter was a Mexican official, and afterwards proved to be the captain of the port, who had come to examine the ship's papers, preparatory to her entering the river.

After performing this duty and partaking of some refreshment this gentleman went ashore, leaving the third, who happened to be the pilot, to take charge of the vessel.

The "Nightingale" was soon under way. A terrible tumult of waters roared and foamed around them as they crossed the bar of the river; but the pilot was well up to his work, and they were soon safely sailing on the smooth waters of the Del Torro. The river was of considerable width, and the surrounding country well wooded—some of the trees being taller than the ship's masts, and of extraordinary circumference around the stem. Birds of brilliant plumage flitted among the branches, their feathers shining like burnished gold in the bright sunshine. Sometimes a humming-bird's nest could be described depending from an inaccessible branch of one of the trees, while the discordant cry of parrots came wafted on the breeze to the ear.

There were plenty of alligators basking about in the river, and Stanhope took much interest in watching and studying their movements.

All these were passed in detail, leaving the young man's mind almost bewildered with the gorgeousness of the scene.

"How far have we to go up this river?" he at last asked, addressing Faulkner.

"Between twenty and thirty miles," the captain said. "And as the breeze is now giving its few last gasps I fear we shall have to anchor before we proceed much farther."

It happened as he predicted. In less than half an hour the breeze had entirely died away, and the "Nightingale," letting go her anchor, rode easily with her head up the stream.

After it grew dark, numberless fireflies were seen all around, their light gleaming fitfully in the sombre darkness of the surrounding forest, while the hoarse cry of some wild beast broke at intervals the deep silence that prevailed.

As Stanhope paced the deck, breathing in the delicious coolness, he occasionally felt a most uncomfortable sensation on his hands and face. He found out the objects of it were mosquitoes, and he was at last compelled to beat an inglorious retreat below, where, with the aid of a mosquito curtain, he soon fell into a profound slumber.

Next morning they weighed anchor at an early hour and proceeded on their voyage. There was a nice breeze blowing at the time, and they bore steadily up the river. Now they would pass immense savannahs waving with tall pampas grass, and in a short time after that be sailing enigmatically by an avenue of noble trees; then would come a ranch in sight and attract, by its peculiar isolation, the young man's earnest attention. And so the day passed away, until they came in sight of a few curious-looking huts, which Captain Faulkner informed Stanhope was their place of destination.

"So this is San Antonio?" the young man said, looking with a feeling akin to disgust on the few scattered huts.

"It is, indeed," Captain Faulkner replied, "and not a very pretentious place either, as you see."

For some time Stanhope gazed wistfully at the place where his lot was to be cast during the period over which his mission extended. It certainly did not present a very imposing appearance to him; nor did it appear to offer any great attractions. A few wooden houses scattered along the side of the river without any attempt at regularity or construction comprised the whole of the village which bore the squalid name of San Antonio.

One house that stood farthest from the river was much larger and far handsomer than the others, and Stanhope at once conjectured that this would be the residence of the principal or grande of the place. Its appearance had not that rough finish so noticeable in the others; it had received a coat of white paint, while the shutters of the windows were painted green, contrasting rather prettily with the white walls of the building itself.

The village stood in an open patch of ground, not more than two hundred yards square, and seen from the river it appeared shut out from other parts of the country by a dense forest.

The "Nightingale" no sooner rounded the bend of the river than the whole of the inhabitants of San Antonio turned out. The anchor was barely let go when half a dozen boats were alongside, and their occupants scrambling on deck to welcome the crew, who appeared to have some acquaintance with them.

The first person who jumped on board was a tall, handsome man between thirty and thirty-five, dressed in a light suit and wearing a broad Panama hat. It was almost impossible to guess from his appearance to what country he belonged originally. His coal-black hair and eyes imparted to him the look of a Spaniard, while the freshness of his skin, combined with his off-hand, frank manner, would have caused many persons to have imagined him an Englishman. He spoke English well, though he cut his words most peculiarly short in pronouncing them, thereby conveying the impression that it was a foreign language to him. He spoke with neither a French nor a Spanish accent, so that in reality it was hard for the listener to determine to what country he belonged.

This gentleman, leaping on deck, advanced at once to Captain Faulkner and greeted him with great cordiality; nor were the captain's greetings, to all appearance, less warm.

"I am glad to see you well, old fellow," he said. "How have you been since I last saw you?"

"Capital, capital," the stranger replied; "but wearying my life out to see a companionable face again. Upon my word, I would rather have it than untold gold."

"You would, would you?" said Faulkner, laughingly. "By the way, I have brought a young English gentleman over with me, whose assistance you may require for a few weeks. Don Pedro Cespedes—Mr. Stanhope Bainbridge."

The dark gentleman changed colour for a moment at the name, but, quickly recovering himself, he hastened forward and shook hands with the stranger heartily.

"I am sure," he said, "this is indeed an unexpected pleasure."

Then, turning to Captain Faulkner:

"Assistance for a week or so, did you say?"

"Yes," was the marked reply. "You'll find his assistance in the office most necessary to you."

The two men exchanged glances.

"I shall indeed esteem it an honour," said Don Cespedes, at last. "My humble house is at your service, Mr. Bainbridge."

The tone was slightly sarcastic, but hardly noticeable from the bland expression of Don Pedro Cespedes's face.

"I thank you," the young man replied, politely, "and I will not neglect to avail myself of your kind offer."

Captain Faulkner called Cespedes aside for an instant and whispered something to him, then they adjourned to the cabin, where the conversation was resumed over hot glasses of brandy-and-water and a few fragrant bavanas.

"You will have no more pleasant evenings with Alfred Lawton," said the dark gentleman, sadly.

The remark was addressed to Captain Faulkner.

"You alarm me," said Faulkner. "What is the matter with him?"

"Dead," said Don Pedro, gloomily.

"You don't mean to say that?"

"I do, indeed. Poor Lawton was killed."

"Killed!"

"Yes. But it is a consolation to think that he died as a brave man should die—in the discharge of his duty."

"What are those villainous Salteadors at their work again?" exclaimed the captain, excitedly.

Don Pedro nodded regretfully.

"I thought as much," said Faulkner. "Come, tell us all about it."

"Well, you must know from past experience," began Cespedes, "that the treasure-bearers on their way from the mines have been repeatedly plundered, so, expecting a chance of a mishap as usual, I sent Lawton with half a dozen of the bravest fellows in San Antonio to protect it on the road."

"Half a dozen!" exclaimed the captain, scarcely believing his ears. "You ought to have sent every spare man you had. What were a half-dozen, let them have the courage of lions, against a host of Salteadors?"

"Unfortunately they were as many as we could prudently spare," replied Don Pedro.

"Then you might have waited till you got more," said Faulkner, bluntly. "There was no particular hurry to get the gold down, was there?"

Don Cespedes bit his lips as he replied:

"I must admit there was not. I indeed represented the matter in that light to Lawton and spoke of the Salteadors. But he laughed at my fears and got his men together. When they reached the mines and got possession of the species they obtained the assistance of four others and started back on their homeward journey. All went well with them the first two days, but on the third evening, as they were coming through a wood, within two miles of where they intended to camp for the night, they were set upon by a large party of Salteadors. Lawton's party fought like lions, but the overwhelming numbers that were opposed to them precluded all hope from the very beginning of the attack. Still, they were not overpowered until they had slain a good number of their foes. The four natives that came from the mines managed to escape, although severely wounded; but the only one of the party who left San Antonio and got away with his life was Miguel Mariano. He was so dangerously wounded in the encounter that he has been unfit for work ever since."

"This begins to pass all bearing!" exclaimed Faulkner, excitedly. "What do you think of a story like that meeting you slap in the face on your first entrée into Mexico, Mr. Bainbridge?"

"It is certainly a most deplorable state of affairs," replied Stanhope. "Can the authorities not put a stop to it?"

"The authorities, indeed!" said Faulkner, derisively, "when most likely the bulk of the booty finds its way into the national treasury."

"Then can nothing be done to punish these scoundrels Salteadors? I have certainly no experience of the ways of this country, but surely something might be done to inspire the rascals with a little wholesome terror."

"Human life is held at so low a value in this country," said the captain, bitterly, "that should there be any attempt to mete out punishment to the villains one would be opposed with insurmountable obstacles at every step; not only that, but you would be running a constant risk of your life."

"That is, indeed, true," Don Cespedes rejoined, slyly; "the truth of the matter is there is no justice in the country."

"But if you, Stanhope," went on Faulkner, "could

devise any plausible plan for the safe conduct of the species from the mines to San Antonio, during your brief stay here, you might find a hearty and able seconder in our good Don Cespedes."

Though the tone of the captain's words was a little marked as he cast a furtive eye on the dark gentleman, it was allowed to pass unquestioned and unnoticed.

"I shall be most happy," replied Cespedes, "to do all in my power to assist my worthy young friend in so laudable an undertaking. I am sure he will be entitled to the gratitude of the whole community, should he succeed."

"It is not at all likely, where experienced men have been so unsuccessful," said Stanhope, smiling.

"Well, you will know more of the matter by-and-by," replied Cespedes. "In the meantime, I must go ashore, as I have still some work to do. I suppose Mr. Bainbridge will remain on board to-night?"

he added, rising from his seat, "and therefore cannot entertain any notion of accepting the proffered hospitality of an old resident—at least, till to-morrow."

Stanhope took the hint, and replied that he could not think of leaving the vessel that night.

"Very well, Mr. Bainbridge," returned Cespedes. "Till to-morrow, then, farewell."

They shook hands, and Don Pedro was about to leave the cabin, when he halted abruptly at the door.

"By the way, Captain Faulkner," he said, "I suppose you will be ready to take off the hatches in the morning; I may want my overseer then to have the hands collected to unload the cargo?"

"Certainly; I am ready to-night, if you like," said Faulkner, bluntly.

"Never mind," replied Cespedes, smiling. "To-morrow morning will do. Good night!"

And so he passed from the cabin to the deck and thence in a boat to the village.

Don Pedro Cespedes left the good ship "Nightigale" that night in anything but tranquil spirits.

(To be continued.)

FAIR ANNE OF CLY. THE STORY OF A LIFE'S AMBITION.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE young Earl of Dalyell galloped off in a state of great excitement to the Cedars, carrying with him the last telegram. Will Darian knew that something of moment had happened when he saw his lordship's heated and excited face.

"Where is Lady Anne?" asked the earl, following Will excitedly into the drawing-room, where the family were seated, including Mrs. Darian senior. "This telegram, straight from Superintendent Howman, has but just arrived. Thank Heaven, it is joyful news for you, Mrs. Darian—for you all. Listen."

The young earl unfolded the yellow sheet of paper and read:

"The woman Nupton in custody. Had attempted suicide, but recovered. An opal pin belonging to Earl of D. found in her possession. If too ill to trust the journey over, will make her confess and swear same before witnesses here. Full particulars sent on to headquarters. Prisoner Cardiff is innocent."

Perhaps Mrs. Darian was most deeply affected with this joyful news. The countess was at a loss to know who the woman Nupton was. Lord Arthur thought, with a sigh, that she would know quite soon enough.

Lord Arthur proposed that he and Will should start earlier than they had intended on the following day for London. They knew that merely the faint outlines of the case would be made known until the prisoner arrived, or her confession of the crime was handed in.

The telegram (official) published in the papers was just enough to whet public appetite, and set several hundred pens going, writing articles commenting upon the singularity of the case, deplored the pain and suffering the sad mistake had caused "Mr. Sidney Cardiff," who had been the day before "the prisoner connected with so foul a crime," etc., dragging in his relationship to the murdered earl's wife, until this appeared:

"Prisoner Cardiff, in custody on suspicion of having murdered the Earl of Dalyell, is innocent. The murder was committed by a woman once famous in the most disreputable circles. She was discovered after attempting to commit suicide, and the opal scarf pin was found upon her."

Of course the papers at once clamoured for the immediate release of Sidney Cardiff, who could not be wanted for any other purpose than as a witness now.

But the law, even when quick in its measures, is slow. The inspector, with Charlotte Nupton, was on the road to England. She was still weak and exhausted, and the doctor had predicted that she would never live to take her trial.

She had, however, made a clear confession, in the presence of a clergyman, at Athens. This confession threw a sad light on the affair, and opened up to public view more grim and ghastly channels connected with the past of the House of Dalyell.

"I, Charlotte Nupton, alias Mary Wells, alias Mrs. James Sunningber," so ran the sworn affidavit, "alone murdered Lord Warton, Earl of Dalyell"—stating the exact hour and spot. "I had watched him from the moment he left the hotel, and I saw some one leave there also and follow him; I thought this was his son Lord Arthur. When the earl was standing with his back towards me he seemed deep—in fact, lost in thought. He did not hear my footsteps. I waited until I saw the figure I thought to be his son come in sight, I fully believed it was his son. I remember now Lord Arthur had a friend strangely like him, I forgot it then. I was quite calm and perfectly conscious of the enormity of the crime I was about to commit. When I got close to the earl and the knife ready I spoke to him. 'Warton,' I said, 'do you remember one Little Brown Poll, as I was called when with my parents at the fishing village of Sefton—Mary Wells, whom you took away to rear and educate?' He turned upon me fiercely, as he always did when I crossed his path, I thought he raised his hand to strike me. I don't quite remember now. I think he did, but I was too quick.

"I was mad; I struck him; laughed in his agonized face when I saw that in that one last moment of life he recognized what I had done. He cried out, 'Oh, Heaven, not death, not death! I cannot die!' I think he tried to remove the dagger, but he fell back then and I saw by the expression of his face that he was dead.

"I fled and hid in some ruins, but near enough to watch the approach of his son, as I thought. I saw him stop and start back in horror. I saw the guard come up and arrest him, and I was floundishly glad. I remember pricking myself with the point of the opal scarf-pin I had foolishly torn from the earl's scarf; the pin I had given him many years ago and told him playfully that it meant the light of true love or death. I had chosen that time for the mad deed so that Lord Arthur would be accused for it. Had he been then I would have found means to have convicted him, by means of the scarf-pin, which should have been found in his possession somewhere. It was to get the viscount hanged that I did it, though there was much fierce hatred in my bosom against the earl.

"When I heard that Mr. Cardiff was accused I was filled with horror. I knew him to be a good young man, as yet untainted by the world's sinfulness. I could not let him die for my crime, so I had determined to take poison, call assistance and confess the truth; but the detective found me sooner than I wished.

"I am penitent for my past life. I think I am glad now that Lord Arthur is spared. I do not regret the deed. I had many years ago sworn to kill the Earl of Dalyell. You will ask why. I will tell you.

"He found me at the age of fourteen, a pretty, sunburnt, robust child playing about the beach of the fishers' village at Sefton. Everybody knew me and loved me, and called me by the pet name of Little Brown Poll, as did my parents. The earl saw me; he was then only Viscount Lerritage. He enticed me away from home with presents and turned my head by showing me the grandeur of his home and property. He asked if I would consent to go to school, and when I became a lady to be his wife. Childlike, I consented. He took me at my word and sent me to a school under the name of Charlotte Nupton, where I stayed until I was turned nineteen. I spent one year in France, then at a French academy. And then he came and took me with him. Need I say that he never married me, and never meant to?

"About this time his father died, and in less than two years he tired of me, returned to England, and married. I was a lost woman then, left alone in the world, for my parents were dead. Filled with shame and horror at my position, what was to become of me? I was considered very handsome, a fine figure, and was sought after and admired. I received a cold, callous letter from him, saying that our friendship must cease from that day, that he had instructed his lawyer to place to my credit the sum of five thousand pounds, and I should receive an annuity of three hundred pounds until I got married.

"I carded for nothing. I felt that I could defy the world, and I led such a life, brilliant and reckless, until my money was dwindling away.

"I met at this time James Sunningber. He was a gentleman of great abilities, and handsome as an Adonis. It was not until after I consented to marry him that I found out that he lived by his wits, the gaming-table, the race-course, and suchlike. For the second time vanished all my golden dreams of quiet happiness.

"I begged him to let us live peaceably together even if our means were ever so limited, and our house a cottage. He laughed in my face. That man, with a woman's vain and Adonis-like face, was a man without a soul. However, he ruined himself in a few years, and is now ending his days in prison."

"I was left a beggar, and when driven to the last extremity of necessity, I plucked up courage and appealed to Lord Dalzell for assistance. He was a widower then. I shall never forget that day. Surprise, anger, scorn, all were depicted on his cold, white face; he even affected not to know me, and threatened that unless I at once quitted his presence he should hand me over to the police."

"I knew him too well not to see that any farther appeal to him would be in vain. I went away full of dark, revengeful feelings, and swore to have a bitter revenge on him. But how?"

"While in that evil state of mind I thought of his young son at college. I made up my mind to exert all my wits and wiles to lure him on to destruction. I thought it would be easy and pleasant work. I looked many years under my real age then, and a very little artificial adornment restored my latent beauty."

"But even the boy, with his mother's gentle face and manners, his slender form and poetical eyes, had the will of his father. The same slumbering demon was in him, and when he discovered the life I had been leading, he spurned me, taunted me as his father had done, and left me, leaving an epithet full of scorn and loathing ringing in my ears. In my savage temper I tried to involve him in the disgrace of an action-at-law. How I failed all the world knows. What more have I to tell that bears farther on the matter in hand? I can but repeat that I alone stabbed the Earl of Dalzell, and with motive and intent to kill, and had long made up my mind to the desperate deed. I alone am guilty of the murder."

She had been duly sworn in. She attached her signature, and then followed the attestations by the signatures of the witnesses.

Such was the brief outline of the shameful history of Mary Willis, daughter of a fisherman, and afterwards one of the most beautiful, most accomplished and dashing women amongst the modern celebrities of her class.

Before the dreadful confession had been made known to the world Lord Arthur and Will Darian had gone to the police authorities and demanded the discharge of Sidney Cardiff.

There was no more delay than could be possibly helped. The very fact that the son of the dead earl went to plead in his behalf was in his favour, though of course, apart from that, as a matter of justice he should be set free.

It was a grand moment for Will when he stood within the prison walls awaiting the coming of his cousin, and he came at last. He was pale and calm, somewhat haggard and hollow-eyed, but the emotion of his heart at this meeting drove away the expression of his intense silent mental agony.

"Sidney, dear Sid," cried Will, taking the young fellow in his powerful arms, and giving him a tremendous hug.

"Will, thank Heaven, have they cleared me of all suspicion?"

"Ay, Sid, the papers say so."

"Sidney!" said the quiet voice of the earl, and Sidney sprang towards him.

"You, Arthur, never suspected me?"

"Never," answered the young earl, solemnly. "Come, dear Sidney, hold up your head, old fellow, and let us walk out. My carriage is outside. Let the world see that your heart and conscience tell you that you are free from crime—that you have been a victim."

"Victim," said Will, who could not find words to express his thoughts on the matter. "If he hasn't been a martyr—yes, a martyr—who has been I should like to know?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

something like the peace of former years had come again in the old homestead where Fair Anne first saw the light of day. The light of the house had come back. Not so bright and transient and fitting as in those old days, but still there softened and subdued by a heart's desolation, toned down by the pain of a life's regret.

The gentle voice, never raised in petulant anger now, or wayward disobedience, could be heard sending forth its saddened and sweetened notes in the simple ballads of tender memory.

The brilliant music, the wayward rompings of a girl, the sweet love and vain coquettices were of the

past—things that were. The changes of late had brought a new epoch of Christian life to Cly, which had lost its fair Anne perhaps only to gain the quiet, contented, gentle lady who made herself known to every one of its poorest and bed-ridden inhabitants.

The hovels of the poor were disappearing, and cottages light, airy and comfortable were springing up, taking the place of the miserable dwellings, and at a cheaper rental.

Those who looked on in silence and marked the changes of the time saw a large and handsome building being erected, by the side of which Rock Farm was attached as a wing, whose future mistress, the widow Countess of Dalzell, but by some singular freak of petting fancy called by those to whom she was known the Lady of Cly, lived in comparative seclusion, going abroad only when required amongst her flock of dependents, old and young.

Will Darian, happy and prosperous, was already looking down in love upon the hope of his future and the pride of his manhood—an heir. The little life had brought with it new bonds of love and happiness, renewed life for the fading mother. She grew stronger and better, and was drifting back to the robust health of her years of indiscretion.

The young earl was absent; he had shut up the Hyde and gone abroad; as had Sidney Cardiff, but not unheard of now. Every mail brought news of him. He was studying as engineer and architect, and his progress was so great that some of the greatest American firms had taken him in hand.

Of the earl but little was heard. He was leading the life of a miserable wanderer at present, drifting idly along the stream of life, going wherever any idle breath of fate chose to drive him. But this was not to last.

One morning early a letter of unusual bulk arrived from Paris, which the countess recognized as Lord Arthur's, and its contents surprised and pleased her. The letter began in the old affectionate style of, "My dearest Lady Anne," and then, after a little of his old rambling levity and sarcasm, there came a grim, very grim passage.

"The time has come now, though only eighteen months since I left you in the dear old house, for me to be serious, to think of my prospects, the future of the house of Dalzell. I have had my quiet times and my dismal ones. This aimless, purposeless way of life palls upon me, I can stand it no longer. I must have a purpose—a religion. I have found one in a—wife—that is she will be my wife—Lady Florence Grasper, a member of one of the most fashionably connected families in England. I shall run over and be married in London or else at the Hyde. In either case your assistance, dear Lady Anne, and presence I must and do most sincerely implore. I know you will like Lady Florence. She knows all about everything and already likes you. Wait and see. Do not think of writing a denial—First, because I shall have left present address, and, secondly, because I won't be said "no" to. Love to dear old Samson—he meant Will—Marian, little Samson, Will, and the rest.—ARTHUR."

Lady Anne was too delighted to refuse Arthur anything. His lordship soon arrived, and, tired of travel, he made his honeymoon a very short one, returning to the Hyde, which was opened with a befitting state for such a great occasion, and everybody was present.

For years the intercourse between the Cedars, Rock Farm and Marine Villa was daily. The old admiral seemed to grow younger, and his love for Darian grew stronger. Mr. and Mrs. Darian, too, went back to their old, quiet, complacent contentment, and Anne, now Dowager Countess of Dalzell, continued her quiet life of seclusion, not from any morbid sentimentality, but because she was really, almost divinely happy.

Her lovely, placid face was a shining light in every house, and amongst the children always. She was loved by her friends, adored by her relations, and the surrounding poor and they would say there was not one amongst them who did not worship the "Lady of Cly."

Sidney kept abroad for many years. In 1864 his name began to shine in connection with some great undertaking.

In Belgium and in Germany his name and fame flourished as one of the greatest engineers of the age, though a young man. In 1867 he came to England to visit the loved ones at home, and met them all there, strangely enough, in the old room, much improved, but with one thing untouched, the pencil sketch, framed and glazed, of the room, with his uncle and aunt, Will and Fair Anne, seated round the hospitable chimney corner, and his own lines beneath it.

He was sorry to find that the Squire and Mrs.

Lynn were both dead. His uncle had very much changed. He did not stay long this time. He had entered into a contract with Napoleon III, for some great works, and he was expected in Paris.

He did not leave Cly, however, until some of the old love that still lived had found its way to the ears of Lady Anne. What was her answer? "Wait and hope!"

In 1867 he was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, for his successful carrying out of the great work entrusted to him, and in 1870 he returned to England, hearing of the death of his aunt.

The old homestead was growing lonely again. Mr. Darian, in his rapid decline of life, was left alone with his daughter. The chevalier, a mature man of just upon forty, thought of this, saw looming in the future still greater distinctions for him; unsoiled, untampered, unchanged, he carried back the old love to his fair Anne, and laid it at her feet. This time not in vain.

Before his marriage with her he was made a baronet for services rendered in England, and through the influence of Lady Anne's high connexions. And with what a glorious thrill of pleasure she gave up the Dowager Countess to be Lady Cardiff, and with Sidney, matured, handsome, grave, and more tender than ever, she might almost feel herself to have gone back those twenty years, and, but for the vacant chair, have dreamed that she was still Fair Anne of Cly.

THE END.

SPONGES.

Very briefly let us try to peer into the inner depths and mysteries of sponge-existence. We already know that our domestic sponge formed part of a living being; that, in short, the living part of the sponge manufactured or secreted the horny, fibrous material which forms so important an object of commercial pursuit. And the living portion of the sponge consisted of a whitish glairy-like jelly, which coated the horny material outwardly, and also lined the canals that permeate every part of its internal structure. This whitish living jelly we know as "sarcodite," or "protoplasm"; but concerning its exact nature, or its relations with the mysterious principle we term "life," we know but little; although speculation and theory have not been wanting in the attempt to elucidate these relations.

My readers will doubtless be familiar with the "protoplasm" battle in many of its varied phases; but in the present instance we have nothing whatever to do with controversy or argument, and so we simply recognize the "vital" nature of this sarcodite, or living jelly, and its capability of itself to constitute a perfect living being, able to carry on all the functions which appertain to the living state. We see it forming the bodies of most of the lower and microscopic animals; and in our sponge it constitutes, as we have seen, the truly living and vital portion of this curious animal form.

Now the living sponge-flesh is, in turn, made up of a multitude of individual portions, each of which is known as a "sponge-particle;" and hence the apparently uniform living matter is found to be composed of an aggregation of semi-independent particles. The entire organism known as a sponge, therefore, in virtue of this constitution of its living portion, is of a compound nature. The little sponge-particles are, in fact, so many minute individual beings, which, massed together, constitute an organic colony; and upon this living colony devolves the manufacture of the fibrous or horny structure we know as the sponge. If we obtain a sponge fresh from the chemist's shop, and shake it over a sheet of paper, we may extract therefrom a number of hard grains or particles, which the uninitiated observer would doubtless regard as mere grains of ordinary sand. And we all know the trouble which the coarser sponges give us when we try to get rid of the "grit," or hard particles, which are commonly embedded among the horny fibres of the sponge. But if we examine these little mineral particles by aid of the microscope, we shall find them to present certain definite shapes, and to exhibit evidence of being distinct structural parts of the sponge. We may thus distinguish mineral particles which are like three-rayed stars. Others exhibit an appearance like an anchor with double flukes, one set at either end; and others may exist as needles.

We thus notice in our sponge a second kind of skeleton, represented by these mineral particles of flint or lime; and to these little bodies the general name of "sponge-spicules," has been given. These spicules, therefore, form a kind of interlacing network of mineral matter, which, distributed throughout the softer horny skeleton, serves to strengthen and support the skeleton, with the living flesh

which invests the whole structure. An ordinary living sponge is therefore a complicated colony of semi-independent bodies, which secrete a horny fibre with its interlacing mineral particles; and by these latter structures the living matter is thus bound together.

A TENDER has been accepted for the execution of the Aquarium at Scarborough at about 70,000*£*, and operations will be commenced as soon as the ground can be cleared; and the works will be vigorously prosecuted in order to the whole being completed in time for the season of 1876. The great beauty of the designs has elicited the warm approval of the shareholders and all who have beheld them.

A CURIOUS crystal of diamond, in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, has been recently studied by Dr. Schrauf. It is a twin octahedron, possessing remarkable optical properties; in fact, some of the faces behave like those of an optically uniaxial crystal. This anomaly in a substance belonging to the cubic system may probably be explained by the peculiar structure of the diamond. It appears that a pale brown diamond is enclosed within the colourless external crystal, and the pressure of the enclosure has induced a state of tension in the parts of the envelope, thus producing the optical irregularity.

THE LATE DUCHESS OF BRUNSWICK'S HOUSE.—The Paris house of the late lamented and much-esteemed Duke of Brunswick in the Avenue Friedland is now in course of demolition. It was a most extraordinary residence, as any one found who endeavoured to enter. For, like a coat or waistcoat, it had to be unbuttoned in order to get in. At the front gate was a metal button, and a visitor would have to press this. It instantly set a number of bells ringing in violent commotion. Admitted into the garden, you still found yourself excluded from the house. Another button had to be touched, and that done you found yourself in an unornished hall. There was no staircase communicating with the upper rooms where the Duke slept. More buttons had to be pressed, and at last you found yourself sitting in an arm-chair, and raised by an hydraulic lift, apparently to the living rooms which the Duke used to occupy. The walls of the bedroom were armour-clad. By an ingenious mechanism, and touching a button, a panel in the wall was removed and entrance gained. The strong box nearly killed the workmen who endeavoured to open it, for it sent off a sudden mitsailleur-like discharge. The Duke de Trevise has bought the house, and has stipulated that all treasure discovered in it shall belong to him. Nothing has been found thus far, but the purchaser has not given up hope, for after the late lamented and much-esteemed Duke had some of his diamonds stolen he stowed away his valuables in all kinds of strange places.

LOVE'S DREAM AND REALITY; OR, THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ONCE more part of the family circle was gathered in the large drawing-room at Halstead Grove. The younger ones lingered after Mr. and Mrs. Halstead had gone to their apartments to prepare for Mr. Halstead's journey, he designing to be absent for a few weeks.

Mrs. Singleton, her son and several others remained.

Myra had noticed a change in Ray on her return home. A shade of distance seemed to have fallen between them. He no longer followed her with eager and loving homage.

She began to prize his attentions more highly the more she felt herself unworthy of them. She appreciated more fully his noble qualities, and sighed to think how she had thrown away his love.

Laurence Wyatt was one of the visitors, and Mrs. Singleton chanced to be at his side as they walked through the back drawing-room.

Suddenly he stopped before a portrait and uttered an exclamation of surprise. He then asked what it was.

"Is it possible you do not recognize that picture?" cried the lady. "It is Mrs. Halstead."

"Mrs. Halstead? Is this her portrait?"

"Certainly. What startled you so at sight of it?"

"It is strikingly—like—a lady I knew once," was the hesitating reply.

"You spoke of her once to Raymond?" questioned his mother, with quick recollection.

"I hardly remember."

"But I remember. Come with me."

She led the young man into a small room on the other side of the hall fitted up as a boudoir.

"Now tell me about this mysterious lady. Ray is so provokingly reticent. Begin at the beginning."

Her playful mood covered a will of iron, and Wyatt did not long hesitate to obey.

She learned the whole story from him.

"And you can doubt this girl being Mrs. Halstead?" she asked.

"How can it be, madam? A singular resemblance, certainly; but she cannot be that unfortunate creature! It is not possible."

"It is very possible; and it is very important that I should know it."

"You—Mrs. Singleton?"

"If this is true, Raymond shall never seek an alliance with this family."

"Raymond knew as much as I did."

"I know it; and he kept the secret from me; but I have discovered all in time."

Wyatt looked frightened.

"There is the luncheon bell!" exclaimed the matron, starting up. "Come, you shall see Mrs. Halstead now, and you shall see if she is the same lady whom you saw under a different name."

The company were assembled at the table. Mrs. Singleton led her companion to Mrs. Halstead, and said, significantly:

"Mr. Laurence Wyatt, Clarice; he came just after you left us. Perhaps you may recognize in him an old acquaintance."

Wyatt took the seat indicated for him and entered into conversation with Clarice.

Mrs. Singleton watched the pair anxiously.

When luncheon was over she took the young man's arm and went upstairs to the little boudoir again. Mrs. Halstead went to her own apartments without entering the drawing-room.

"Now?" said the lady, looking inquisitively at her young companion.

"I must acknowledge you are right, madam!" returned he. "But you will consider our conversation as strictly confidential?"

"She is the same?—she is the girl you told me you had once known?"

"She is the same!"

"And Ray knew it?"

"He judged it best to say nothing; and I should have been warned by his example. You will not speak of what I told you, Mrs. Singleton! I entreat you, let my confidence be held sacred!"

"You do not know what is at stake!" cried the excited woman. "You do not know what wrong has been done; what wrong may yet be done."

"Let the past be past. It can do no good to drag it up!"

"And see my son defrauded of his inheritance, if it turns out as I suspect! You have no proof, Mr. Wyatt, of the man's death!"

"None; but I heard that he died years ago."

"He may be living; probably is living, or she would not have been so careful to avoid exposure. Why, she has hardly gone into society the whole winter!"

"I beseech you, Mrs. Singleton, do not draw down Ray's anger upon me by disclosing what you drew from me. I ought not to have told you any family secrets."

"Be easy, Mr. Wyatt; Ray shall not know I heard the truth from you!"

There was an archery party in the afternoon, and in the evening a dance at the house of one of the neighbours. Mrs. Singleton was to return to her own home a little after dusk. Ray, by his Cousin Halstead's desire, would stay all night, and drive him next day to the station.

Toward evening Mrs. Singleton despatched a note to Mr. Halstead, requesting an interview on private business.

He went to the library to meet her.

"I have a duty," said Mrs. Singleton, "most painful to discharge. But, Gilbert, I can no longer suffer you to be deceived!"

"Deceived!"

"You have been so; I fear to your own disgrace; to the defrauding of those who have the first claims upon you."

"Mrs. Singleton, you use strange language—you are excited. What has happened? Pray take a seat, and try to speak calmly."

"I have made a discovery which has appalled me!"

"What discovery?—one concerning me?"

"Yes, your rash marriage!"

"My marriage?" Halstead faltered.

"Yes, Gilbert Halstead. You took to your heart and home a girl of whom you knew nothing, without inquiry into her antecedents. It is the discovery of these that has well nigh crazed me."

"You are mistaken, madam, in saying I knew nothing of my wife. I knew her to be a woman true, pure and noble of soul; such a woman as Heaven made to be man's best blessing! She told me of her antecedents."

"She never told you that she had been the wife

of a common felon and swindler! that she had been the toast and the talk of his gambling and rowdy companions! that—"

"Stop, Mrs. Singleton!" cried the gentleman, catching her arm. "It is you who are deceived, for I will not suppose you capable of concocting such vile falsehoods! My wife was never married before—"

"She deceived you, Gilbert. Her husband was a gambler, a drunkard and a swindler. He was arrested for forgery; he was tried and sent to prison for a long term of years. He is there still."

"Silence, woman!" thundered Halstead, seizing her by both wrists and facing her sternly. "I allow no being to calumniate my wife!"

"Send for her, then, and see if she will dare deny it. Will she deny that Edward Stanhope, her lawful husband, is in prison for his crimes, and that she is an impostor?"

Halstead let go her wrists and quietly stepped to the bell and rang it.

"Say to Mrs. Halstead," he said to the servant who presented himself, "that I beg she will have the goodness to come here."

He was silent, and with a stern gesture, enjoined silence on Mrs. Singleton till the door again opened and Clarice came in.

"You sent for me, Gilbert," she said. "Has anything been neglected?"

"I sent for you, Clarice," said her husband, solemnly, "not for my own satisfaction; but to put down a wicked calumny. This lady," pointing to Mrs. Singleton, "who has for some months been enjoying your hospitality, has lately listened to some trumped-up story of your past life, which she brings to me as a proof that you have deceived me."

"Oh, Gilbert!"

"I do not doubt you. I have never doubted you, my wife. Do not tremble so; give me your hand, and tell her she has foully wronged you. Now, Mrs. Singleton?"

"Mrs. Halstead," said Mrs. Singleton, "was not the old lady who visited you secretly in Cousin Gilbert's absence your mother?"

Clarice hung her head for one instant, and her hand in her husband's grew cold as ice. The angry lady went on:

"Was she not your mother, unacknowledged, and did not you visit her many times in secret? Was she not the false and guilty wife of Colonel Atherton?"

"She was not guilty!" faltered Clarice, in a tone of deep feeling.

"The world wronged her, then. Society cast her off when she forsook her husband and fled, it was said, to follow a man who had been her lover. The story is well known. She bore one of her children with her; you were that one. Your younger sister, left with her father, went on the stage as Madame Brentano. He found her last winter, after she too had made a disgraceful marriage, and took her home. You visited her again and again. You cannot deny this."

Halstead had dropped his wife's hand, and stood awaiting her answer.

"I do not deny it," replied Mrs. Halstead, simply.

"But—"

"Pardon me. You will remember, Cousin Gilbert, you had requested that none of your family should visit at Colonel Atherton's after he had defiled public opinion by taking home his daughter, covered with evil report as she was. Mrs. Halstead has corresponded with her since—"

"She is my sister," pleaded Clarice, in agony, looking at her husband.

His face was turned from her.

"You remember," continued her pitiless enemy, "the circumstances of your acquaintance with Edward Stanhope after you left school."

A low cry escaped from the pale lips of the hunted woman.

"Your intimacy with him injured your reputation. His companions were men of the worst sort; they came freely to your house; they regarded you as Stanhope's mistress."

"It is false!" cried Clarice, desperately, putting out her hand, as if trying to stem the tide ready to overwhelm her.

"It is true that such was the rumour. You married Stanhope! You married that guilty man; guilty of the foulest crimes that stain humanity. He was convicted of forgery with attempt to murder, and was sent to prison!"

The poor wife stood like a statue of stone in mute despair.

"You forsook Stanhope then; you left him to his prison life. You came and passed yourself off as an unmarried woman; you lived in my cousin's house; accepted his offered hand, and never told him that you were the wife of another man!"

"Speak, Clarice!" said her husband. "Tell her

"All this is false. Why do you not speak? It cannot have been true."

"It was true, Gilbert!" she answered, faintly.

And slowly turning to look at him she sank at his feet in a dead swoon.

The unhappy man smote his forehead in mortal anguish.

"You have killed her," he groaned, "and your work is done!"

Mrs. Singleton burst into a passion of tears.

"As Heaven is my witness, Gilbert," she cried, "I only wished to open your eyes; to avert the disgrace ready to fall on you! You know, now, that I spoke the truth."

"Begone, woman, and leave my house! Never come here again," were the stricken man's words, as, kneeling, he tried to lift up his insensible wife.

"Let the matter be a secret between you and me till you have sifted it to the bottom!" urged the matron. "Go and find the felon in his prison home! Then you can judge what it is best to do to save your name and family—to save Myra—from the curse! You will not blame me then?"

"Leave my house!" repeated the man to whom she had known such despair.

It was all he could say. Impatiently he waved his hand to bid her depart.

"Let me take care of her!" she entreated. "If all I have heard be true, she is not your wife!"

"If you would not drive me quite to madness, and have me kill you in my frenzy," he said, "begone out of my sight! Never let me see you again."

He looked like a man beside himself, and Mrs. Singleton was fain to obey.

"It was my duty!" she muttered, as she passed out of the door. In a few minutes her carriage drove off.

Halstead rang the bell for his wife's attendants, and she was carried to her room. He waited more than an hour in the dark till he heard that she had fallen into a quiet sleep. Then he sent for the housekeeper and stated the necessity of his leaving home. "My way is not to go to the station with him. He had left a note for him. The doctor must be sent for to attend Mrs. Halstead.

In another hour Mr. Halstead was on his way, alone.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DAY and night the captive kept up her watch by the window in the vain hope of release. She refused the invitations of Blake to go out with him; she pleaded indisposition, and begged to be left to herself.

On the fourth morning after her conference with the strange man at the window Florence stood at it, gazing out upon the sky and landscape with a heavy heart. If her messenger should fail what would become of her? Who would look for her in this wild place?

Suddenly she saw a small figure running. It was the boy who had attended the carriage that brought her. His looks, as she could discern when he came nearer, were full of alarm. Her heart beat tumultuously, and she clasped her hands in unspoken prayer. Something had surely happened, and her deliverers might be at hand.

There was confusion below. She ran to the door and listened. She heard Blake swearing furiously. Then he gave hurried directions, and presently she heard the old woman coming up the stairs.

The woman's face looked frightened as she came in, and she left the door open.

"You are up, and it is well," she said. "Put on your cloak, and come with me directly."

"I will not stir, unless I know whither I am going."

"Oh, honey, your husband gave the order, and you must obey, and so must I. Hark, the carriage wheels, they are ready. Come along, or you will make him angry, and 'twill be wuss for both of us!"

She seized Florence's arm, and strove in vain to drag her to the staircase.

In another moment Martin Blake was in the room. His captive had shrunk into a corner, and tried to beat him off with her hand, as he made a dash towards her.

"I will brook no trifling!" he shouted. "I believe this is some of your work!"

As he spoke he seized her in his strong arms and bore her towards the stairs.

By this time the wheels of a carriage were heard rapidly driven close to the house, with the trampling of horses and the shouts of several men.

It was too late for the hurried flight Blake had intended.

He released the girl; she sprang to the doorway, crying loudly:

"Father! my father! I am here! Save me!"

With a brutal oath, the villain dragged her back, hurling her to the floor.

"Look here!" he cried, in a voice hoarse with passion, "I am your master yet. You need not hope to escape me."

Florence had partly risen from the floor.

"I will kill you before you shall be taken from me! Your last moment is at hand, unless you swear to live with me!"

He came towards her. She only clasped her hands and looked upwards in mute appeal to the Power who alone could protect her.

There was a tumult of voice below. Blake, at one fierce bound, seized Florence, forcing her back upon her knees.

"Will you promise to live with me?" he cried. "You die this moment, if you will not!"

He fumbled for his pistol; but neither that nor the knife he usually wore was about him. The victim struggled for freedom and shrieked for help. Her screams were answered by persons ascending the ladder.

"Curse you for an obstinate idiot! You shall die then!" hissed Blake, as he clutched her throat.

But the villain had not time to accomplish his deadly purpose. Several men leaped into the room at once and laid hold of him. So resolute was his clutch on the throat of her he meant to slay that she was dragged up with him ere his hold relaxed. She was caught before she fell again in the arms of Colonel Atherton.

"My father!" she breathed faintly, and her eyes closed on the terrible scene going on.

The him closely, men; seize him, and lock and bolt the door on him," were his parting directions as he bore his half-fainting child down the narrow stairs.

He placed her in the carriage at the door, and bade the two men who were below secure the old woman and boy, and bring them along to the landing-place.

"He shall have a taste of the prison he doomed my child to for some hours at least," he said, as he gave the coachman directions, and the carriage drove away rapidly.

His instructions were obeyed literally. Blake, fast bound, was left a prisoner in the strong room, and the woman and her boy were carried off.

Towards evening they came creeping back on foot and released the captive, who had soon found the hopelessness of cries for aid or profane execrations.

He came downstairs, full of curses and threats of vengeance, to learn that his assailants, with the rescued lady, had taken the boat, and were by this time in perfect safety.

Colonel Atherton had been found by his daughter's messenger, and lost no time in setting out, with police officers and men, to find and rescue the lost darling of his house. He shuddered as he remembered how near he had been to seeing his daughter murdered before his eyes.

"But you are safe now, my love," he said, folding her in his arms, "and free from the villain for ever! Your divorce is decreed by the court."

They did not return home till the next day. Then Colonel Atherton announced to his daughter his determination to take her to reside abroad. They would leave immediately and sail for Marseilles.

Florence offered no opposition to the plan. She needed but a few days' rest after what she had undergone, and kept herself strictly in her own room, refusing all visitors. Rupert Edgerley came several times, but could not see her. She only wrote to her sister—for they had promised to write to each other—that she would be in New York by such a time, to remain a few weeks in that city.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE strong constitution of Clarice Halstead saved her from a long attack of illness; but she was in bed many days before she was able to consider what was best to be done.

The husband whom she adored had apparently cast her off; yet she knew herself still worthy of him; she had errred only in withholding her full confidence from him. Would he trust her now? If he would, they might be happy again.

One morning her maid informed her that Myra wished to see her.

She came in with a letter in her hand, and, seating herself on a stool at her feet, she unfolded it.

"It is from papa," she said. "He says he is going to New York."

"To New York?" repeated the wife, starting violently.

"Yes; and he does not know when he will return. See, he writes in a very disconsolate strain, as if he were unhappy about something. Do you know what it is, mamma?"

Clarice shook her head. She could not trust her self to speak.

"It is very strange he should have any trouble and not write to you about it."

A sob answered her. The stricken wife had

covered her face with her hands, still unable to speak.

"Mamma! Clarice!" cried the girl, starting up, "there is something in this I cannot understand. Tell me what it is. Perhaps I can help you."

She put her arms around Clarice's neck and kissed her. She felt the tears as she did so.

"You cannot help us, Myra," at length the poor woman found strength to say.

"I should not wonder," suddenly burst out the impulsive girl, "if Aunt Selina has had something to do with it. She has not even written to me, and she has made Ray so cold to me."

There was a quiver in her tone as the girl uttered the last words.

"Ray cold to you?" repeated her step-mother, in surprise, removing her hands from her face.

"He has been a different person since we came from the South," cried Myra. "I know his mother has been making mischief. She is a bad, evil-tongued woman."

"Hush, Myra; it is not for you to judge her."

"But I will judge her if she has been planting dissension between you and my father. Tell me—has she not?"

"She could not, Myra, if I had not been to blame."

Clarice again covered her face, and Myra saw that she was weeping.

"Trust me, mamma," she pleaded, kneeling by her side, and throwing her hands around her.

The sick heart of the forsaken wife yearned for sympathy, and in her extremity she resolved to confide her grief to her stepdaughter, and did so, with an injunction of secrecy.

"I thought Aunt Selina was at the bottom of the trouble!" exclaimed the girl. "It was so wicked of her! What possessed her to go to my father with such a story?"

"I cannot tell. She appeared to think he was disgraced by my previous marriage."

"How could he be? The man was dead, you say, before you came to us; before you went to teach."

"I had heard so; I felt sure of it."

"You never lived with him, you say. He was arrested the day you were married to him."

"He was. We were separated the same day. I saw him twice before the trial; never afterward."

"And when did he die?"

"Six months after he went to prison."

"Did you see him dead? or how did you know it?"

"The news was brought to me. I never doubted his death till long after I knew you and was sheltered in your happy home."

"What made you doubt it then?"

"Something Raymond had heard and repeated to me. He was opposed to my marriage with your father."

"I know he was. Aunt Selina wanted him to inherit the property."

"I did not attribute any mean motive to him. But I was alarmed and anxious to learn what my true position was. I sent to New York. I had an old friend, a lawyer, who sought out persons who had known Edward Stanhope. He went to the prison and there ascertained, beyond all doubt, that Stanhope had really died and been buried at the time stated."

"I am glad of that!" cried the girl.

"I was free. I was delivered for ever from the incubus that had crushed me, and I fancied that no stain rested upon me. I resolved to break away from past misery and shame. It should be buried with him who had caused it, I said to myself. I loved your father, and I knew that he loved me. I indulged the dream of happiness, and thought not of any awakening, but I ought to have confessed everything to your father before I consented to be his wife."

"My father was too just to blame you for the wickedness of another. Are you sure what you told me was all Mrs. Singleton told him?"

"I am not quite sure. She may have led him to believe that my first husband was alive when I married your father."

"If he had been you would not have been papa's wife at all?"

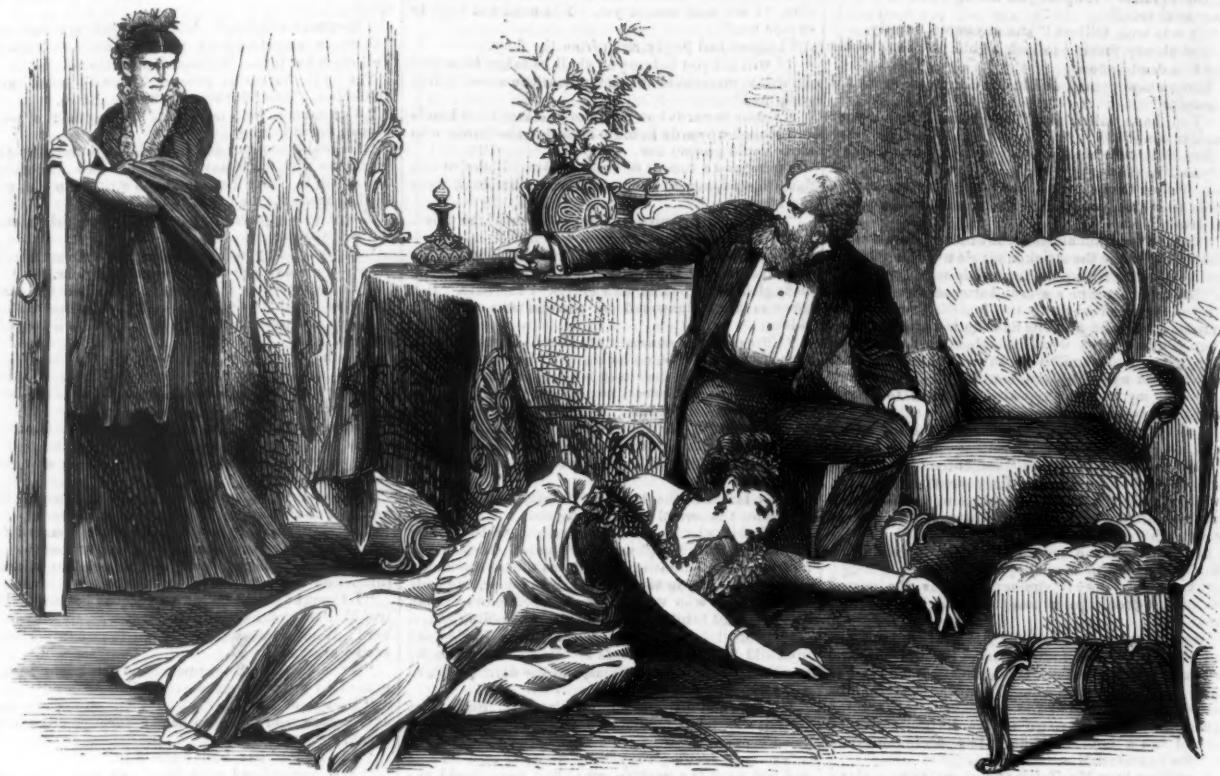
"Certainly not."

"That is it—be sure! The artful woman has made him believe that! Let me go to her and demand where she heard such a base slander!"

"No, Myra—you could do nothing with her. It would only make the sad story public. Your father can learn for himself the truth. He must intend going to search it out."

"I will write to him and tell him all you have told me. May I not?"

"If you choose. I should like him to know what I can say in my own defence. And I will give you



[A WOMAN'S WORK.]

some names of persons who can give him information."

This was settled, and by evening Myra's letter was despatched to the post-office. It did not reach her father, however, till he had started on his journey nor indeed for months after it was written.

When days passed and brought no answer, nor a single line from her husband, Mrs. Halstead had taken a new resolution. She was convinced that Gilbert meant to separate himself permanently from her. The pride she knew to be so morbidly sensitive stood in the way of his acknowledging a wife who had been, when he married her, the widow of a convicted felon, who died under the sentence of the law. Her parentage, too, was disreputable in his eyes. He regarded her as having deceived him into wedding her, and as unworthy to share his name and fortune.

Her spirit rose against the cruelty and injustice of such treatment. But she would not contend against the pride that was his second nature. She would no longer accept the home he would not share with her.

Her determination was strengthened in several interviews with Olympia Atherton, who had followed her to Virginia, and who, in feeble health, was living in a small house some two miles distant.

The income forced upon her by Colonel Atherton was not only sufficient for all her wants but enabled her to offer shelter to the unhappy woman whose husband had manifestly cast her from his love.

Clarice made a confidant of Myra; but the girl's tears were powerless to move her. Subsequently letters from her sister gave information where they were living in New York, and invited her to pay them a visit before they should sail in June for Europe.

"Your father will be home soon," Clarice said to Myra; "and you, child, must comfort him. I will leave a letter which you must put into his hands."

The next day she left Halstead Grove. Her mother joined her, and they proceeded northward.

Two weeks afterward Gilbert Halstead returned home.

Myra was shocked to see him so much altered. His hair had blanched, and his face was pale and lined as if with a long illness. The shock and wear of mental trouble tell fearfully on one who has reached middle age.

His daughter threw herself weeping in his arms and told him at once that his wife was gone. Then she put her letter in his hand and left the room.

It was a letter that deeply affected him, for it showed a pride equal to his own, but the pride of a noble nature. Mrs. Halstead had inferred from his

not replying to Myra's letter of explanation that he had refused to receive it as a vindication of her. She was conscious of no fault except the one error of having forbore to disclose everything in her past history before their marriage. She had wished to do so, but he had checked her, as he must remember, and she was too timid not to accept his assurance that she need not dwell on the past. Without his restored confidence she could not remain at his home; to be merely tolerated would be a daily death to her. With the generous renunciation of all the advantages of her position, for his sake, her intense and faithful love breathed in every line and word.

For hours the proud, sorrowing man sat leaning his head on his hands in painful reverie. He felt the truth, the nobleness of the woman he had rashly judged unworthy of his name and confidence. He had not received Myra's letter, but he needed no explanation, now that he had given time for his judgment to resume its ascendancy, to convince him of the goodness and truth and purity of his wife. He would have taken her to his heart at once had he found her. How suddenly were their relative positions reversed, so that he appeared in his own eyes the wrongful accuser and the unjust judge!

He did not hear the trampling of a horse's feet up the avenue, nor the summons of the front door bell. The door of the library opened, and Raymond Singleton softly entered.

Halstead looked up and silently extended his hand.

Raymond pressed it warmly, and then took a seat close by his cousin. He had just learned all from his mother, with the news of Mrs. Halstead's departure.

It was time for him to speak, he said.

And he told the unhappy husband all he knew. It placed the deceived girl—Miss Kent—in a different light entirely from his mother's charges. She had never for one moment lost the respect of all who knew her; had never admitted the acquaintance of Stanhope's intimates. He had been arrested on the day of their marriage, and she had never been his wife but in name. The name she cast off when she found him depraved and reckless, though her pity moved her to efforts on his behalf. These were vain; and, hopeless of bringing him to repentance, she bade him farewell for ever.

The laws would have given her an easy divorce, but she would not ask for it, preferring to bear the penalty, she said, of her blindness and folly in being so easily deceived.

Yet who could blame her—almost a child in years—alone and unprotected, and dependent on her own

efforts for a subsistence? She was honoured by all who knew her sad story. She restored to all whom Stanhope had wronged, what he took from them, so far as her ability extended. One diamond necklace worth a fortune she gave back to the jeweller from whom he had purchased it on credit. She did not finally go away till Stanhope's death in prison; then she went South with the intention of taking a situation in the school where she had been educated.

Raymond had severely reproached his mother for her ill-judged interference. They had parted in anger, and he had come to his kinsman, hoping to be able in some way to offer reparation for her evil work.

Halstead shook his head in utter desolation of spirit. "She has left me" was all he said; and he put her letter in Ray's hand. He read it with deep emotion.

"I will find her," he said. "I will bring her home to you if you will receive her."

Myra had silently entered the room while the young man was speaking. Her cheeks flushed to rich carmine at sight of Ray, then became pale; but she suppressed her emotion. As she saw her father hesitate, his face convulsed with his own feeling, she rushed forward, knelt beside him, and flung her arm round his neck.

"Oh, papa—dear papa! let us go—you and I together! We want no interference—no help from others! I know how Clarice loves you!"

"My dear, do you not see your cousin?" said Halstead, lifting her face from his shoulder.

Myra averted her face while she held out her hand to Raymond.

"We are very much obliged to him," she said; and he thought he saw evasion in her enforced courtesy. She again embraced her father.

"Let us both go for mamma," she urged.

"She is right, Cousin Gilbert," said Ray. "It will be better for you to go. Mrs. Halstead might well be mistrustful of me."

It was not difficult for the husband to consent. It was arranged that they should set out immediately.

But their plans were frustrated by unforeseen events. The next day Halstead was thrown from his horse in leaping a ditch, and brought home insensible. A fever ensued, and he was for many weeks a prisoner in his room. Myra was his sole nurse, for she would not permit Mrs. Singleton's offered visit; and even Ray she saw as seldom as possible.

(To be continued.)



[A BRIDE IN SPITE OF HERSELF.]

THE
SWEET SISTERS OF INCHVARRA;
OR,
THE VAMPIRE OF THE GUILLAMORES.

CHAPTER VII.

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall medicine thee to that sweet sleep
That ownedst yesterdays. *Shakespeare.*

This dreaded stranger made a bow, half-mechanical, half-mocking, to Aileen.

"I regret to intrude," said he, not looking at her; "but, unfortunately, explanations are necessary. Pray do not allow me to keep you standing."

She obeyed his slight gesture, and sank upon the settee once more, for her trembling limbs refused to support her; and he immediately seated himself at a little distance, and, with his eyes on the floor, and a sort of bitter irony in his voice, spoke thus:

"Young lady, I believe you know nothing whatever of the wickedness and transgressions of this sinful world; that your observations have been wholly confined to the guileless and frugal existence you and your fair sister lived in the Castle of Inchvarra. Under these circumstances, I fear it is impossible for you to comprehend my motive for gaining possession of your person, as I have done this evening; therefore, I will not trouble you with any ethical analysis of the situation, but proceed to business. You are now on board my yacht, surrounded by an unscrupulous set of Italians, ready to do anything"—here he fixed his gloomy eyes on her—*"at my command; the only woman near you a Spanish Moor, half-heathen, half-infidel, and my slave. The one person on board who can either understand or protest you is—myself. Do you listen, Miss Guillamore?"*

She made a slight motion to show she did; for, indeed, terror almost paralyzed her.

"Of course you are aware," continued he, mockingly, "that if you ever had any chance to enter society and make a good match, to-night's escapade has effectually spoiled it; in fact, that your humble servant has done you the irreparable wrong of putting your name in the mouth of every gossip who may choose to blacken it when it is ascertained that you did not perish at Kinvarra, but that you eloped with a young Englishman. Such cruelty I am willing to make amends for in the only manner society recognizes—I have the honour to ask your hand in marriage."

There was a short silence.

The young man regarded the little scared face opposite him with something like anxiety; while she, with whirling brain and wildly beating heart, took in his meaning.

Gradually he saw the small, bright head erect itself, the blanched cheeks glow, the blue eyes deepen and dilate. She clasped her tiny hands tightly; she flushed a sudden, proud, scornful glance upon him.

"You villain!" said Aileen, indignantly, "I will never marry you!"

In utter stupefaction he gazed at her. It was as if a cowering little gray sparrow had abruptly turned to the great, lazy hawk which was just about to make agulp of it.

Presently he recovered himself enough to reply, with a malevolent sneer:

"Your spirit, equally with your unreasonableness, takes me by surprise. You must surely suppose that I have not put myself to all the trouble, risk and annoyance of achieving your abduction to be baffled in my intentions now by your silly objections. I assure you, my dear young lady, that you must marry me!"

"I will not," replied she, her cheeks blazing more brightly, her voice more steady and resolute than before, while she poured wrath and defiance and contempt upon him from her two wide, azure eyes.

"Really!" muttered the young man, with a short laugh, while a deep glow of surprise and shame mounted to his brow. "Why, Miss Guillamore, I had not expected to encounter such a heroine. Perhaps you are practical as well as heroic. You see around you evidences of my wealth. I am of very good blood. I am neither old, ugly nor decrepit; on the other hand you are one of the most poverty-stricken of young ladies; you have no expectations, and I believe are unengaged; why then, in the name of common sense, should you refuse a matrimonial prize such I offer you, especially when social ruin awaits you if you do?"

"You wicked, wicked man!" cried Aileen, in the unmeasured language of injured innocence. "Say what you please, I won't—I won't—I won't marry you!"

Not another word, nothing but exasperating defiance.

The young man rose considerably ruffled, and paced the glittering salon with a hurried step, despite the pitching of the yacht, which now seemed to be in the full roll of the open ocean.

At length he paused beside the settee upon which Aileen sat, crimson-cheeked and rebellious.

"Do you think I am in love with you to be defeated by your no?" said he, impatiently.

"No!" answered she, promptly. "you expect that I will inherit a fortune, and you are in love with it." He positively gasped.

"And I was warned to beware of wicked, selfish men, who would covet it," continued she. "You, of course, are one of them."

He had now recovered himself. He bent down and looked in her eyes, a laughing demon in his own.

"Right," said he; "you are sharper than I thought. And I am sharper than you think, so sharp that before you know where you are I shall have a legal right to call you my wife."

He stepped back, took a small golden box from his pocket, and out of it a delicate pinch of some powder, which he flung on the flame of the lamp, and, with a mocking smile at his victim, instantly withdrew.

What had he done?

What dreadful thing was about to happen now?

With sickening apprehension Aileen watched the flame of the lamp as it gradually burnt paler and paler, until it shot forth scintillations of livid, greenish hue, and filled the atmosphere with a heavy, stifling odour.

"I am to be stupefied into submission!" thought Aileen, in horror, and, with her handkerchief to her nostrils, flew into the next cabin, which the tissue curtain had concealed from her view, looking vainly for a door to close between her and the noxious air of the salon.

This cabin she found to be little more than an alcove, entirely lined with rich white satin, and lit by a lamp, whose flame shone through a pale rose-coloured transparency.

In the middle of this alcove, which seemed like some grotto hollowed out of sunset-flushed snow, stood a low Arabian bed, its posts and foot-board splendidly ornamented with silver; at the head an angel in marble stood, one finger on her lip, and one arm outstretched over the glistening mound of eider-down beneath, clouds on clouds of costly lace flowing down from her arm to the floor on either side.

A heap of lace, white satin, and a wreath of orange blossoms lay on the silken coverlet; the lace-wreathed toilet table was covered with all the implements of a lady's toilette; nothing was wanting to impress upon the amazed and shrinking Aileen that she was filling the place of a bride-elect.

Meantime the subtle atmosphere had followed her into the bedchamber, and she was breathing it in spite of herself.

She ran back to the cabin she had left, and tore

at the windows to open them, then tried the door, then seized the swinging lamp and strove to put it out; but all was in vain, every window mocked her efforts, the door was locked, and the lamp was of such peculiar and complicated construction that she could neither blow it out nor screw it out.

The flame, however, soon burned clearly as before, and she ceased to notice the drugged odour in the cabin.

Tremblingly she sank upon the settee once more and thought upon her extraordinary situation with all the powers of her mind.

It was patent that her grim abductor was resolved to marry her by force if she would not give her consent.

Aileen vowed to keep her senses about her if she had to bite her fingers off to do it, and to defeat him even yet.

She sprang up nervously and began to pace the rocking cabin rapidly, fearful lest some insidious sleep might steal upon her and bind her helpless.

Meanwhile she had never removed her handkerchief from her nostrils and fondly hoped she was not inhaling the drugged vapour.

Thoughts wild and dauntless hurried through her brain—now she would give her life rather than her liberty; now she would yet escape to Vara and be avenged by Denis, if she were only resolute in keeping off the insensibility she dreaded.

But no drowsiness, or weakness, or befuddling of the intellect attacked her; on the contrary, she never felt stronger or clearer in the head than now.

As she walked about a sort of mental exhilaration buoyed up her hopes and her courage—nay, exalted them to a pitch of enthusiasm.

The longer she mused the more impossible did it seem that a tragedy so black, so cruel, so blighting, could be enacted in her calm, simple life; the more impossible did it seem that Vara should be so bereft, so stricken with hopeless sorrow for her unhappy sister.

The picture of Vara came back to her, too, with startling distinctness; and with a glow of tender sympathy she mused on Vara's bewilderment and distress, and on the steps she would most likely take to recover her upon finding her hat and discovering the cuff, with what was written on it, which she had so cleverly hidden in it.

Absorbed in these speculations, it was with a great start that Aileen found herself no longer walking about, but seated in an arm-chair with a delicious sense of languor and rest stealing over her.

She sprang up with a whispered cry of dismay, and recommenced her nervous march, thoroughly roused to her imminent peril.

Backward and forward, backward and forward, while the glittering saloon creaked and swayed, and the lustrous lamp swung, and the mirrors flashed and darkened in the shifting light, and the waters gurgled past, and the heavy feet tramped outside; backward and forward, again and again, in ceaseless, dizzy round, while the little whitening face looked at itself in passing mirrors with large, solemn, fearful eyes, and the little clasped hands felt each other in trembling anxiety, and the little gliding feet crept slower and slower, slower and slower—stopped, started on a few steps, stopped again—stood still.

Like a charming picture of some frightened, perplexed child-woman the lovely creature stood transfixed, and knew not that she stood, and still dreamed on that she was resisting the spell.

And when the fiery-eyed woman entered and dashed open windows and door, while she sprinkled the cabin with exquisite perfumes, though Aileen saw and knew her for that woman of whom her abductor had said she was his slave, she forgot to fear her now, supposing that that resolve she had in her mind to resist had grown to be a weapon of such power that nothing could overcome her!

The woman laid her olive hand upon Aileen's arm, and in a sort of placid wonder Aileen observed that she did not feel though she saw the touch.

Seeing that she did not flinch, the woman took her in her arms and carried her into the next cabin, placing her in a deep chair.

Then she closed the windows and door, and with deaf fingers and in dead silence undressed Aileen and put on her the bride's dress, the sweeping, mist-like veil, the orange-blossom wreath, the white gloves and shoes; and carrying her back to the saloon, laid her in an attitude of languid weakness in one of the easy-chairs, her pretty feet on a silver-framed footstool, two or three elegant bottles of revivifiers on the small table at her elbow, and left her.

She sat alone, the innocent young thing, not fearing the weird spell that was upon her, and too spell-bound to struggle against it, dreaming a strange and witching dream from which all personal interest had vanished.

Objects around her had changed to forms of yet more singular beauty. The small cabin had magni-

fied until its sandal-wood walls seemed far and dim as the walls of a cathedral, its satin-lined ceiling as high as the heavens, and down with golden stars; its mirrors were windows into new worlds of unimaginable beauty, and the wild furs on its floor mosaics of strange precious stones.

As if some magic wand had been waved over all, all was etherealized, sublimed, endued with more than mortal charm.

The sound of the boar's sea-song and the heavy tread of the sailors seemed then like the song and the march of armies; the whistles of the meaning wind through the cordage like the sweetest sound of angels; the roar of the deep sea like the grand crash of the world's last day—awe-inspiring beyond words!

The vision of herself as she beheld it in an opposite mirror was a creature of seraphic loveliness, clothed in clouds of silvery light, and sitting on a throne of starry splendour, into whose large, solemn, powdered eyes she loved to gaze with a reverential rapture.

Her trance was ruffled anon by a figure approaching her and bending over her.

She looked at that figure as at one of the beings of her wonderful world, and in that dread hour, when reason was banished from her throne, and only the aesthetic faculty remained, she recognized all that was noble, elegant and pleasing in that bending form, and deemed it endowed with more than mortal beauty.

He lifted her gloved hand, and it lay in his passionately; he gazed in her lovely face and she returned them placidly.

Then he passed, and low voices spoke near her, and other forms clustered round her, and she sat dreaming one of the most marvellous and unpeachable dreams that ever embodied spirit was blessed with, while a ruthless demon was binding her with such chains as she had vowed to die rather than wear.

One wild bound her slumbering senses gave, it was when a soft, cool, velvet palm pressed hers in a steady clasp.

Through the velvet of that clasp she felt again the murderous grip of brutal violence, and her flesh crept, and her spirit revolted in a sudden frantic burst of loathing; she made a vehement effort to cry out, to shake off the spell that chained her—in vain; not a muscle of her sweetly folded lips quivered, not a shadow darkened that solemnly serene countenance.

It passed; visions of yet fairer forms floated before the dazzled dreamer, sounds of yet more witching sweetness entranced her ears.

Suddenly a light shot up in Aileen's brain like a column of blinding radiance which blotted out all the beauties of dream-pagantry; it lasted for one unendurable, agonizing moment, then an awful doom-like blackness fell upon her and she knew no more.

CHAPTER VIII.

Hope, like the gleaming taper's light,
Adorns and cheered the way,
And still as darker grows the night.
Emits a brighter ray. Goldsmith.

VARA GUILLAMORE might have gone to sleep on earth and waked in fairyland, so new, and strange, and beautiful was her life under the beneficent wings of Mrs. St. Columb.

During the old life at Castle Inchvarra it was up with the lark to toss on garments the pristine freshness of which had long departed, in a bare, antiquated oaken bed-chamber, with bed furniture of medieval damask, amid deafening whirring of millions of sparrows in the wide gullet of the chimney and round the narrow, deep-silled windows; out in the jovial bluster of the morning gale, to climb down the long, dizzy, winding steps out in the grizzled face of the Inch for the morning bath in a whirl of foam and a gush of green brine; breakfast of the simplest, nay, at times, of the scantiest of viands, when old Elise might be heard to say:

"My blessin' on thim, the crathurs, they've cleared the board, an' not another pratie in the house!"

Then a scurry over the purple moor on Freak and Fancy, faithfully followed by two old yellow curs, sweetly, if inappropriately, appalled Rose and Violet; afterwards, some hours' demure "study" of leather-bound volumes in the gaunt, spider-haunted library.

Dinner, served in state by Elise in her best dress, and waited upon by Denis in his imaginary capacity of chief butler, or by Dick in Denis's absence—Dick reeking from rustic toil, but grave and deferential as any noble's body-servant; dinner served in state, waited upon with propriety, eaten merrily, and frequently consisting of the "blessed praties" and a sheep's head!

Then an afternoon in the "withdrawing room," a bare, chilly apartment, which looked on the moaning main, where the young things played at being fine ladies, worked fine-lady work, principally designed by themselves, for patterns cost money, and where was the money? Or they played on the jingling ghost of a musical instrument which had ornamented that nook for twenty long years, and had not breathed its last sigh yet; and they used to sing to that ghostly thing. My heart! how their voices rang! "Twas like the happy songs the spirits sing in Heaven, as the people used to say.

And the day was closed by a stroll to the village hand-in-hand, with sweet words scattered here and there to people who idolized them, words which were dearer to those hearts than golden guineas tossed from the indifferent hands of princely patrons. Ay, they were loved well, the sweet sisters of Inchvarra, though they had nothing to give but good will.

That was the old life, now left far over behind; how wonderfully different was the now.

Vara had her apartments apportioned her, and they were on suite. The first was her boudoir. This was velvet to walk on, velvet to recline on, velvet to fall in rich round folds from the tall windows; the glitter and glimmer of gold-ribbed chintz, and veiled mirrors, and small, gay-like pictures, a general impression of peach-blossom colour and faints of light.

The second was her dressing-room. It was paved and lined with pink-veined marble, and was lit from the top by a circular, richly stained skylight; in the centre a monster Indian shell lay on its back, its rosy cavity filled with a purring wave of topid, perfumed water, which by means of an invisible escape-pipe never overflowed. This charming bath was veiled by flowing folds of delicate gauze which fell from the crown of a silver-ribbed, slender pillar beside it; the honey, curd-white material seemed like a splash of ocean-foam embedding the pearl shell.

In an ornamental alcove the dressing-table stood, richly draped with blush-rose silk clouded over with tulle, and glittering with flasks of silver and tall, slender vases of priceless glass, and a Venetian mirror set in a fairy-like tracery of silver.

The third was her bed-chamber, wherein all was virginal whiteness, with one tasteful exception. Low, white bed, enveloped in drifts of lawn, long-haired rugs of snowy purity, couches of sheer-white, silk-like, half-frozen snow-chairs—and the walls hung with a pale, shimmering, sea-green satin. Effect, enchanting!

Vara was wont to be awakened in the morning by Gita, Mrs. St. Columb's confidential German maid, who was invariably sent to inquire most particularly into the state of the young lady's health.

Florine, a smart French maid, then appeared and assisted Vara at her toilet, which Mrs. St. Columb had willed should be as rich and sumptuous as her own.

Then breakfast in the bijou breakfast-room, where amid the mingling fragrances of myrtles and forget-me-nots, which grew in costly jardinières in the windows, Vara toyed with her French roll and chocolate, and in wondering homage admired Mrs. St. Columb.

Then a few hours in Mrs. St. Columb's boudoir, while the lady strove by every art to win the heart of the homeless girl, and to help her to overcome the grief which was killing her; where she played to her, sang to her, wept with her, spread the treasures of her richly stored mind before her to amuse her moved Heaven and earth to win and hold her faith.

Then lunch, and after that a drive through Clonac, behind a pair of three-hundred-guineas horses, attended by a model footman, in the most elegantly inconspicuous livery, and seated in a fairy chariot brought from Paris by Mrs. St. Columb to help her pass the weary time among the Irish hills.

After the drive, Mrs. St. Columb to her sanctum to write oceans of mysterious correspondence. Vara to her own boudoir, there to be taught by the deaf Florine those fine-lady accomplishments of needlework and personal adornment which Elise had left out in her training.

Then dinner, served in state indeed! Where two perfect footmen anticipated every wish, and a bill of fare, composed to tempt a Lucullus, adorned the board, where the ladies wore gems that vied with the wines for colour, and with the goblets for lustre, and where Mrs. St. Columb shone with intellectual brilliancy, and every phrase was delicately turned as if Moore graced the banquet.

The evening was always spent in the charming little drawing-room, usually upon the same divan, where, with Vara's dusky head upon Mrs. St. Columb's downy bosom and her hand in her velvet palm, the lady drew in sobbing whispers the smallest details of the lost life of the sweet sisters from her protégée.

For Vara loved the lady with a love akin to wor-

ship. From her own innocence, candour and simplicity she looked up to this superb woman with wondering veneration. Had she not deigned to stoop from her own proud heights to pity and succour the outcast? Did she not daily enter into the innermost sanctuary of the outcast's heart, and with careful fingers handle all its secrets?

But Vara Guillamore was meanwhile fading—fading!

Mrs. St. Columb never adverted to her own past life. After briefly explaining that she was of foreign birth, a widow, wealthy, and only residing for a few weeks in Ireland for a change of air, she dropped the subject entirely and seemed to live only in Vara's life. She knew no one in Clonachen, she had no visitors, she spoke of no friends. Yet she did not wear the hopeless, enfeebled air of one upon whom affliction has cast a gloom, or the bitter manner of one upon whom society has shut her doors.

She was genial and bright-tempered and charming as the southern zephyr, which ever bears a hint of unseen flowers and fruits upon its lambent breath.

One day while driving along the country road, a party of tourists passed in an Irish jaunting-car. One of the gentlemen, a young, dark, handsome man, uttered an exclamation as his eye rested upon Mrs. St. Columb, and in a trice the car was drawn up, and he was hastening back, hat in hand, to Mrs. St. Columb's carriage, which she had ordered to be stopped.

"Who would have thought of encountering Mrs. St. Columb in these savage wilds!" cried he, gaily.

"Who would have thought of encountering the Marquis of Winstanley in a jaunting-car!" retorted she, as gaily, and extending her delicately gloved hand she gave him a frank and gracious greeting.

"My dear girl," said she, turning to Vara, whose snowdrop face and mourning robes had already attracted a curious glance from the young peer, "this is a friend of mine whom I met in London last winter—a very agreeable man—for a marquis," added she, with a sudden syren smile upon him. "You may come and see us," said she, loftily, "we live at No. 40, Brougham Street, Clonachen."

With a flush of gratification, and a low parting bow, the marquis ran back to his friends and the ladies proceeded on their drive.

Mrs. St. Columb's smile faded, her eyes clouded, she relapsed into a reverie which was not broken until they stopped before her own door.

Vara had scarcely noticed the interruption to her own brooding meditations, and she never knew till long afterwards that in that abrupt introduction to the Marquis of Winstanley her name was not mentioned.

It happened that the next afternoon Vara was sitting, as she often did, in sorrowful solitude, holding Aileen's little black velvet hat in her lap. So often had she wept over it and kissed it that she thought she knew every bow upon it by heart. Today while mechanically fingered the lining, she felt an irregularity, and a moment afterward pulled out the crumpled linen cuff. Wondering how it came there she turned it over and over, and all at once saw the pencilled writing and guessed that it was a message from Aileen.

With shaking hands she smoothed out the yellowed, crumpled thing and read these words:

"Vara, I am safe enough; carried off by the man we saw on the road. Send Dick after."

Vara fell on her knees in great excitement, hardly believing her senses, and almost struck senseless by the mighty revulsion of her feelings.

Aileen not drowned after all. Safe—ah! safe then, but where now?

The young man they met on the road—yes, the sketcher who had met them three times. Heaven help us! What was the meaning of this? Yet, oh, thank Heaven! thank Heaven! Aileen is alive!

Such were Vara's wild, hurrying thoughts, if thoughts they could be called, that flashed through her excited brain, and quickened the thick pulses of her throbbing heart. Then she recollects her benefactress, and as a child flies to display its treasure to the being of whose sympathy it is most certain, so Vara flew to Mrs. St. Columb, flushed, radiant, the tears yet on her long lashes, and her rich curls lying in tangled masses on her shoulders. That was a vision not often seen that burst upon the lady and her ruddy visitor, as they sat quietly chatting in the opal-tinted boudoir.

"Oh, madame, Aileen is alive! See what I have found!" began Vara, breathlessly, quite blind to the presence of a stranger.

Mrs. St. Columb made a swift gesture with her hand that silenced Vara, while she rose, and with stately grace excusing herself for the moment to the Marquis of Winstanley, whose wondering eyes Vara now met fixed upon her, she swept out of the boudoir, taking the young girl with her.

Vara followed her as with hurried steps she led the

way to her private room, and wild as were her emotions she could not but observe the slight pallor of the lady's bloom and the preoccupation of her eye.

"Now, darling," said Mrs. St. Columb, "what is all this? The sister, you say she is alive. How—explain, my poor child," and she flashed a deeply anxious glance upon Vara.

"Yes, she is alive. Look what I have just found hidden in the lining of her hat," panted Vara, eagerly spreading out the cuff on the palm of her hand so that Mrs. St. Columb could read it.

The lady's eyes flashed over the writing, and a whispered foreign ejaculation escaped her, while her bloom faded still more perceptibly.

She raised her magnificent eyes to Heaven with diamond-bright tears standing in them.

"Ciel!" murmured she, "the poor children, they are victims to their old servant's fond delusion. The whisper of the wealth he thought to bring them has brought greedy adventurers around them as the scent of carrion brings the vultures."

"But, oh—to think that my darling is really living yet!" cried Vara, in an ecstasy, scarcely heeding the words of her wiser benefactress.

"Yes, that is sweet, that is comforting," said Mrs. St. Columb, rather abstractedly. "Your sister has her life yet—unless she has given it in exchange for her liberty," she added to herself.

Vara's quick ears caught the words, however, and they recalled to her the terrible position in which Aileen was placed, at the mercy of a villain, whose cold and bitter face had struck a disagreeable chill to her own and her sister's hearts when as yet he was nothing but a passing stranger to them.

Weeks had passed since he had stolen Aileen from her home, and not a word from Aileen since; alas! what had become of her?

Vara cast a heart-rending look of helplessness and terror upon her generous friend, and to her farther dismay saw that she was biting her lips and knitting her brows in angry thought.

"Oh, you think she might as well be dead as in her present position?" faltered Vara.

Mrs. St. Columb looked up, chasing away the gloom and pallor of her countenance with a tender smile.

"Forgive me, dear; I had almost forgotten that a quaking little sisterly heart was hanging on my verdict of the affair, in my indignant speculations as to the probable fate of Miss Aileen. No, my Vara, I do not think so hopelessly of her position as that; she may outlive the villain who has forced her to marry him for the sake of the money he supposed she was to inherit; and then you may see her happy again."

"And she may come back any day to Inchvarra, and Inchvarra is no longer ours!" exclaimed Vara, tears rushing from her eyes.

"That is not probable," returned Mrs. St. Columb, reassuringly; "she is under age, and the man will take good care to keep her safe in his own hands until her majority, when the marriage cannot be disputed. You saw him?" she inquired, earnestly.

"Oh, yes, three times; surely we might trace them, and rescue her?"

"And you would recognize him in a moment, of course," resumed Mrs. St. Columb. "My love, we shall certainly try to find this man. He must have lodged somewhere about Varra, he must have left some clue. All shall be done that can be done. Cheer up, darling; Aileen shall be rescued if Justice St. Columb spend a million on the chase. For your sake, who have crept so strangely into my long-empty heart, I will devote my life to the exposure and punishment of those who have dared to wreck the happiness of your home."

And a fond embrace sealed the noble promise.

Was she not a friend indeed?

In those days was Vara Guillamore was ignorant of this world's sensible, practical ways, she felt no overwhelming astonishment at this stranger's devotion to her cause, supposing, beautifully but illogically, that the angel form must needs hold an angel heart, and that the angel heart had prompted the angelic acts.

Later, when she began to learn how few of that ilk inhabit this world, she knew better how to appreciate this fair lady's magnificent generosity.

Time went on.

Mrs. St. Columb called to her aid many instruments and set them all to work to search for Aileen Guillamore and her abductor. She flung out money like water; she gave herself no rest; she was indefatigable. She and Vara took long journeys east, west, north and south as the agents called upon them to go and identify this, that, and the third innocent stranger.

The inquiries after the murderer of Denis Guillamore had been dropped by the indifferent Irish authorities; Mrs. St. Columb set them on foot again, and offered splendid rewards for the arrest of the criminal.

Meanwhile Vara's health, now buoyed up by hope, now depressed by disappointment and worn by constant suspense, waned away, and she found herself a languid, nervous invalid, to whom the slightest exertion became an intolerable burden.

And nothing was discovered—nothing!

Mrs. St. Columb began to look long and sadly at her favourite; began to sink into gloomy reveries; began at last to despair.

One day, when Vara dragged herself—pale and half-eyed from a miserable night's struggle for sleep which would not come—into the breakfast-room, Mrs. St. Columb, startled by her death-like appearance, turned as white as ashes, and though she made no remark Vara felt that she was trembling spasmodically when she kissed her.

During the meal she scarcely spoke, and scarcely ate more than poor Vara herself, whose glorious young appetite was a thing of the past.

Vara at length recalled her from her abstraction by pushing away her cup and laying down her head on the table with a stifled burst of tears.

"Main Engeloin, my little angel, what is it?" exclaimed Mrs. St. Columb, rising in haste, and taking her in her arms.

"You think I'll never live to see Aileen again!" sobbed Vara. "Don't say no; I see it in your eye that I am dying."

"Hush! hush! Heaven forbid!" shuddered Mrs. St. Columb, sinking on a chair; "you are ill, but it is suspense that is making you so. I am ill myself of hope deferred. Are you really very weak, Vara?"

"Oh, I don't know," sighed Vara, wearily, "I feel very strange sometimes. If we could only hear anything about her!"

Mrs. St. Columb continued to gaze at her apprehensively, but changed the subject.

"My Vara," she said, gravely, "we must go to London, and go at once."

"And abandon the search?" inquired Vara, quickly.

"No, no, no; continue it. The man you say was an Englishman, he has hidden her in London, that world where people may hide for years. We shall go there, and some day you will meet your sister's abductor face to face in the street, at the assembly, or in church. Meanwhile my agents shall not be idle. And," she added, suddenly averting her face from Vara's earnest eyes, "the eminent French doctor, Count de Sain-Cyr, lives there. I wish to put you under his care."

(To be continued.)

EARLY RISING.—The difference between rising every morning at eight and at six in the course of forty years amounts to twenty-nine thousand two hundred hours, or three years one hundred and twenty-one days and sixteen hours, which are equal to eight hours a day for exactly ten years; so that rising at six will be the same as if ten years of life (a weighty consideration) were added, wherein we may command eight hours every day for the cultivation of our minds and the despatch of business.

YET ANOTHER SKATING RINK.—The Duke of Devonshire, who has only recently completed the formation of an extensive recreation and cricket ground at Eastbourne, has expressed his intention of executing farther works for the benefit of the town, at an estimated cost of 16,000L. The want of a large assembly room has long been felt, and his grace intends erecting a spacious pavilion, 350 feet in length. While providing a large hall for meetings, space will also be afforded for a public library. Adjoining will be winter gardens and a skating rink.

OCEAN SOUNDINGS.—The ocean soundings which have recently been made with so much scientific care show that in the neighbourhood of continents the seas are often shallow. Thus the Baltic Sea is found to have a depth of only 120 feet between the coasts of Germany and Sweden; the Adriatic, between Venice and Trieste, has a depth of only 130 feet; between France and England the greatest depth does not exceed 300 feet, while south-west of Ireland it suddenly sinks to 2,000 feet. The seas in the south of Europe are, however, much deeper than the preceding. The western basin of the Mediterranean seems to be very deep. In the narrowest parts of the Straits of Gibraltar it is not more than 1,000 feet below the surface; a little farther toward the east the depth falls to 3,000 feet, and at the south of the coast of Spain to nearly 6,000; on the north-west of Sardinia bottom has not been found at the great depth of nearly 5,000 feet.

LORD BYRON'S SWIMMING.—Lord Byron was as proud of his feats in swimming as of his poetry. His greatest exploit was swimming across the Hellespont, seven miles, in imitation of Leander, the hero of the classic fable. Lieut. Ekenhead was his companion, and is said to have been more rapid and more graceful in the water than Lord Byron. Neither of

them appeared to be exhausted, but the latter rested several times, swimming to the boat that accompanied them, and holding on to the side while he took some refreshment. Byron had a curious fashion in his daily bath in the Bosphorus, while at Constantinople. He took with him always two eggs and a few biscuits. After undressing he threw one of the eggs with all his force, marked where it struck, swam to it, and ate it in the water. He did the same with the other egg, and then, after swimming till satisfied, dressed himself, ate his biscuits, and returned to the city. The uniformity of this practice showed that, with all his eccentricities, he had some tendencies to regular habits.

SEA-WEEDS.

AT this season, when many of our readers are looking for health and recreation at the seaside, a few hints may be found useful concerning the gathering and preservation of algae or sea-weed. They rank among the most beautiful natural objects, while the work of collection and mounting is delightful occupation for the leisure hour.

The best time to collect is when the tide has just commenced to flow, after the lowest ebb, as the seaweeds are then floated in, in good condition. All specimens should be either red, green, purple, black or olive; no others are worth preservation.

Mounting is done by immersing a piece of paper just below the surface of the water, and supporting it by the left hand; the alga is then placed on the paper and kept in its place by the left thumb, while the right hand is employed in spreading out the branches with a bone knitting needle or a camel's hair pencil. If the branches are too numerous, which will be readily ascertained by lifting the specimen out of the water for a moment, pruning should be freely resorted to, as much of its beauty will depend upon the distinctness of the branching. Pruning is best performed by cutting off erect and alternate branches, by means of a sharp-pointed pair of scissors, close to their junction with the main stem.

When the specimen is laid out the paper should be raised gradually in a slightly sloping direction, care being taken to prevent the branches from running together. The delicate species are much improved in appearance by re-immersing their extremities before entirely withdrawing them from the water. The papers should then be laid flat upon coarse bibulous paper, only long enough to absorb superfluous moisture. If placed in an oblique direction, the branches are liable to run together.

They should be then removed and placed upon a sheet of thick white blotting paper, and a piece of washed and pressed calico placed over each specimen, and then another layer of thin blotting paper above the calico. Several of these layers are pressed in the ordinary way, light pressure only being used at first. The papers, but not the calico, may be removed in six hours, and afterwards changed every twenty-four hours until dry. If the calico be not washed, it frequently adheres to the alga, and if the calico be wrinkled it produces corresponding marks on the paper.

The most convenient sizes of paper to use are those made by cutting a sheet of paper, of demy size, into 16, 12, or 4 equal pieces. Ordinary drawing paper answers the purpose very well. For the herbarium each species should be mounted on a separate sheet of demy or cartridge size. Toned paper shows off the specimens well, a neutral tint answering best for the olive, pink for the red, and green for the green series.

DELICACY.—One of the chief characteristics of a good woman is delicacy: not that affection which is perpetually in quest of something to be ashamed of, which makes merit of a blush and simpers at a false construction its own ingenuity has put upon an innocent remark, but that high-minded delicacy which maintains its pure and undeviating walk alike among women as in the society of "creation's lords," which shrinks from no necessary duty, and reflects with seriousness and kindness upon all things.

DO DOGS DREAM?—Every person familiar with dogs must have observed them, frequently, when sleeping, to manifest signs of dreaming. We can relate one instance which affords pretty strong evidence that they do dream. Before the pointer and setter became so common in America it was customary to hunt partridges with dogs that "treeed" them, as it was called. When a partridge rose the dog would give a succession of quick, sharp barks, which caused the partridge to alight on a tree, when the gunner, cautiously approaching, would shoot him. A dog which had been used for this very purpose, and also for hunting rabbits, had a very different bark for the two kinds of game—if we may take the licence to call rabbits game. This dog was very much in the habit of barking in his

sleep, and the members of the family could tell, by the difference in his bark when in his sleep, whether he imagined himself after partridges or rabbits.

A MARK OF HONOUR.—In England, when a gentleman kisses the hand of a lady, the act is construed by her into one of marked devotion. English ladies who go abroad are somewhat startled, therefore, to find that kissing the hand is the national custom in Austria. A gentleman, in meeting a lady with whom he is acquainted, especially if she is young and handsome, kisses her hand. On parting with her he again kisses her hand. It is very common to see a gentleman kiss a lady's hand in the street on meeting or parting with her. If you give a beggar-woman in the street a few coppers, she either kisses your hand or says, "I kiss your hand." Chambermaids, beggars, and even little children, all observe this custom. The words "kiss your hand" appear to be the same in German as in English, or at least sound the same. The gentleman kisses the hands of married women as well as the single, and it is taken as an ordinary salutation and a token of respect.

EXPECTATIONS.

CHAPTER V.

MR. VERNON followed up his evil work with promptitude. He allowed one day to elapse and then went out again to the little cottage at Kensington.

He found Harold Park alone, Mrs. Park having gone out upon some necessary household errand. The artist was pale, inert, and spiritless, incapable of work since his recent excesses, and in a mood to yield to the solicitations of his tempter.

Vernon glanced over the half-finished picture on the easel, reported various items of society gossip, and finally invited the artist to go with him to examine a fine picture which was on exhibition at a West-end shop.

Park fell into the trap so artfully laid for him, and accompanied his relative. The picture was duly visited, examined, and criticized, and the two men then adjourned to Vernon's club, where they dined as before. At a late hour of the evening the artist was sent home alone in a cab, helplessly intoxicated.

Twice during the week that followed the artist was reduced to a similar degrading helplessness through the wily machinations of his secret enemy. The appetite for drink grew upon him. He became impatient, irritable, restless, with a consuming thirst for liquors. He had indeed fallen an easy prey to the arch-schemer.

Vernon was secretly exultant. He imagined that the destruction of Harold Park would be more speedily accomplished than he had at first dared to hope. But there was one obstacle in his path upon which he had not counted—a lion in the way of his evil success. That obstacle was the devotion of Harold Park's young wife.

One morning, some ten days after Vernon's villainous scheme had been entered upon, Harold Park lay upon the chintz-covered couch in his bare little drawing-room fast asleep. He had come home at an early hour of the morning. His thin face was flushed unhealthily; his breathing came hoarsely and heavily between his parted lips; his clothing was stained and disordered. The picture he presented was not one upon which loving eyes might linger calmly.

A drizzling rain without curtailed the windows with heavy mist, but within the room comfort reigned. A bright fire glowed in the grate. An easy-chair was drawn up near the fender, and dressing-gown and slippers were arranged for the artist's convenience when he should awaken.

The small, round table was covered with spotless damask, and two pretty pink china plates, pink china cups and saucers and dishes, and a vase of flowers, were arrayed upon it.

The tea-kettle sang upon the hob, and three or four covered dishes were basking in the firelight upon the hearth.

Mrs. Park was dressed in a gray cashmere morning robe, with facings, collar, and tassels of crimson silk. She looked worn and troubled. There were dark circles around her eyes, and her mouth had a pained and sorrowful expression that was infinitely touching.

As she finished arranging the table she went into her bed-room, returning with a damask towel and a bottle of cologne.

Kneeling down by the helpless being on the couch she tenderly bathed his face and hands, brushed out his hair, and cleaned his stained garments.

She had not slept all that night; she had not even retired to her bed; it seemed to her that her heart was breaking, yet she felt no sense of repulsion against her husband, and her gentle touch seemed a constant caress.

She had finished her task, and was about to arise from her knees, when a low tap was heard on the door, and her landlady entered the room with but scant ceremony.

The countenance of the bank-clerk's wife, always severe, was severity itself now as she turned her gaze upon the artist. Mrs. Park arose hastily, preparing a chair.

"Thanks," said her visitor. "I won't sit down. My husband and I had a long talk this morning, after Mr. Park came in, and we have concluded that we cannot endure such riotous goings-on any longer. Our house is getting to be the talk of the neighbourhood. We are quiet people ourselves, and it is not right that we should suffer from the faults of others. I am sorry to say this to you, Mrs. Park. You are a real lady, and have never made me any trouble. I feel for you, a young creature who has the right to expect so much from your husband, but who receives only disappointment. I am a great deal older than you, and I have seen many husbands like yours. Let me advise you, Mrs. Park, to leave this man and go back to your own people."

"I know that you mean kindly, Mrs. Griggs," said Mrs. Park, gently; "but my husband is my own, and I shall never leave him till I die."

"But you have rich relations who will gladly give you a home."

"My place is with my husband."

"Can you not see that your husband is travelling straight to ruin?" demanded the bank-clerk's wife. "He has not done a stroke of work this week. At this rate you will be in the Union in six months. Look at Mr. Park as he lies there! He is thinner than he was a week ago. He is going downward with a swift rush. He will not live a great while."

The young wife's cheeks whitened, and she said, tremulously:

"So much the more need that I cling to him! But he will not die. He will be himself again very soon. Surely, Heaven has not forsaken us."

"I take it that Heaven forsakes a man when a man forsakes himself," said the bank-clerk's wife, severely. "When the demon of drink gets his fearful hold upon a man there is no hope of that man's reform. The demon drags him down to ruin and death! No loving hand can draw the erring soul back to soberness and industry. Will you throw your young life away in a vain attempt to rescue your husband? Will you wreck two lives because one must be lost?"

"I cannot answer your reasoning, Mrs. Griggs," said the young wife, simply. "I have had no experience in these things, but I know that I love my husband, and that I will never, never forsake him! Only one thing can save him—that one thing is love! If I leave him he will go straight to ruin. I must cling to him, hold him back with all my feeble strength, pray for him, and love him to the end. I took him for better or worse. Marriage is not an obligation to be set aside at will for causes even like this."

"Then you will not leave him?"

"I will not."

"I give you a month's warning," said Mrs. Griggs, her face flushing. "I shall need these rooms as soon as you can vacate them. And when you move from here, Mrs. Park, you are taking a deep step down toward the poverty and ruin of which I warned you."

She went out abruptly, closing the door hard.

Winnifred Park knelt down by her husband's couch and sobbed and wept in an utter abandonment of spirit. Then, as she grew calmer, she prayed fervently for her husband's rescue from the vortex into which he had plunged; and, comforted and strengthened, she arose at last, confirmed in her holy purpose of self-devotion.

An hour later Harold Park awoke.

His wife met him with no reproaches, no pleadings for his reform, no complaints of any sort.

His eyes opened upon a warm and pleasant scene, and Winnifred came towards him with a sunny face from which every shadow of care or anxiety was banished.

"How my head aches!" said the artist, quizzically.

"Breakfast is all ready, dear," said his wife pleasantly. "Let me give you a cup of strong coffee to steady your nerves. Will you take my arm?"

She offered her slender arm gayly, and the husband did not notice the quiver of her sweet mouth.

He declined her assistance and walked to the mirror, surveying his haggard reflection with a sigh. He then took his place at the table, and his wife waited upon him, telling him about her flowers and bird, and avoiding all mention of the landlady's recent visit.

Mr. Park listened and drank his coffee in a moody silence.

When the breakfast was over he arose and paced the floor unsteadily, and suddenly exclaimed:

"You're an angel, Freddy. You have not said one word about my shortcomings, and some women have nagged a husband to death for faults less than mine. We'll have no more of this folly of mine. I am going to work in a day or two on Sir Mark Trebasil's picture. I shall make it my stepping-stone to fame. You shall be proud of me, little woman."

"It will be pleasant when you resume painting, and I can help you mix your colours again," said Winnifred. "You will be home all the day, I suppose, and I will read and sing to you, and we will study for the picture, will we not?"

"Well, not to-day," answered the artist, with some embarrassment. "You see, Freddy, a party of us are going down to Kingston with a four-in-hand, and we shall dine there, so I shan't be home till late. You needn't sit up for me."

A faint shadow clouded Winnifred's eyes, but she said, gently:

"Can we not go together to Sydenham to-day, dear, as you promised me a month ago? I fancy that you will like that better than a dinner at Kingston, and there is to be music—"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Park, impatiently. "But I have given my word that I will go to Kingston to-day, and the visit to Sydenham is impossible. Some other time we'll have our little trip together, Freddy."

"Does Charles Vernon go with you, dear?" asked the wife.

"No," said the artist, half-impatiently. "Why do you ask?"

"He seems to be so intimate with you lately," said Winnifred. "Harold, I don't quite like Vernon, although he is your cousin. I wonder why he has taken such a fancy to you, and so suddenly. I know you will think me foolish, dear, but he seems to me like your evil genius. We were very happy and prosperous until he took us up so lately. Harold, dear, if he would but let us alone we should be as happy as before. I am beginning to fear him."

"Nonsense. Why should you fear him—the best fellow in the world?"

"He used to visit us now and then, and I rather liked him," said Winnifred. "But it seems to me of late as if he had some evil design against us! Forgive me, dear, but you were very different before he began to visit us lately. I cannot explain what I mean. I would not accuse him of meaning us harm. What good could our destruction do him? And yet all my instincts warn me to beware of him."

"Instincts? Prejudice, you mean! What woman's nonsense is this? Do you think I can't take care of myself, Winnifred? What earthly reason could Vernon have in working harm to us? Don't be foolish, little woman."

Winnifred smothered a sigh. As she had declared, all her instincts revolted against Vernon. She blamed Vernon for her husband's departure from rectitude, and felt dimly that he was the artist's enemy, and she feared him. But she did not give farther utterance to fears which she could not explain.

"Harold," she said, after a brief and thoughtful silence, "why could we not go to some quiet country town while you paint your pictures? Mrs. Grigs wants these rooms at the end of the month, and as we must now seek new lodgings why should they not be in the country?"

"Mrs. Grigs wants her rooms, eh? I was thinking yesterday that I should prefer a more fashionable quarter," said the artist. "She can have her rooms and welcome. As to the country town, we'll see about it. I am making a host of friends now—fashionable fellows, to whom Vernon has introduced me—and I hardly think I'll leave town at present, except to accompany a shooting party to Scotland."

A sound was heard as of some one ascending the stairs. Park glanced down at his disordered garments, and abruptly retreated to the adjoining bedroom. A knock was heard upon the door, and Winnifred hastened to admit the visitor.

It proved to be Mr. Vernon, and he entered smiling, and with a searching glance about the room.

He was well dressed, polished of manner, dark and saturnine as usual, his black eyes and white teeth glittering brightly. To the troubled gaze of the young wife there seemed revealed a dark and hidden purpose in his demeanour, and she felt that upon her devolved the task of defending and protecting her husband against him.

"Is Park not risen yet?" asked Vernon, lightly. "He is growing fashionable—yet you appear to have breakfasted!"

"We have breakfasted. Harold is dressing. Be seated, please, Mr. Vernon. Harold will be out soon."

"You do not look well, Winnifred. Has anything gone wrong?" inquired Vernon, accepting a chair.

"You ask me that?" demanded Winnifred, her

eyes flashing with a keen yet half-suppressed indignation. "You know that everything has gone wrong with us during the past two weeks, Charles Vernon. Till you took us up lately we were happy. Harold was prospering, was respected and sober. What are you doing to him? What will you gain by his ruin?"

Vernon started and drew back with a sudden sense of alarm. Was he playing his wicked game so clumsily that the innocent eyes of this girl could perceive it? He forgot that the eyes of love are always keen to perceive the evil that threatens the loved one.

"What a singular address, Winnifred!" he exclaimed, with a forced laugh. "I have not harmed Harold. Is he not my cousin? What good could his ruin do me? You insult me—you wrong me."

Winnifred's clear eyes were fixed upon his face.

"I do not comprehend your purpose, Charles Vernon," she said, "but I know that you hate my husband and seek to destroy him. I love him and I will save him. It shall be a war between us, but I shall save my husband. Love shall triumph!"

"You are melo-dramatic," sneered Vernon. "I wish no harm to Park. He's a jolly good fellow and a pleasant addition to our parties, and I like to have him with us. If you say the word, I'll turn my back upon him to-day and not visit him for a year."

"I wish you would not!" cried Winnifred, impulsively. "If you really have any kindly feeling for us, show it by letting us alone!"

Before Vernon could reply the artist emerged from the inner room and gave him a cordial welcome. A little later the two men went away together, and Winnifred was left to solitude.

Vernon's evil schemes prospered that day. It seemed as if some attendant demon were assisting him and fostering all his wicked plans. With a party of several young men, including Park, he made the trip to Kingston in the afternoon, dined there, and returned home in the evening, every member of the party, excepting Vernon, being under the influence of liquor.

Their vehicle was a four-in-hand drag, which was driven by one of the members of the party, a sporting young man, who prided himself upon his horsemanship. He was, like the others, in a hilarious mood, and ambitious of showing his skill, his discretion being lost, he whipped his spirited horses mercilessly, and so irritated them that a running away was the result.

The horses ran at the top of their speed for a mile or more, and then turned a sudden bend in the road and upset the drag, which was drawn upon its side for some distance, its occupants being violently hurled out upon the roadway.

Of the entire party only one person was injured. That person was Harold Park.

Vernon procured a vehicle at a farm-house and conveyed his victim home, the artist groaning throughout the entire distance. They carried Park up to his own room, where his wife sat alone awaiting him. He was placed in bed, a physician sent for, and his condition investigated.

The doctor looked very grave as he turned away at last from the bedside and went into the outer room.

Winnifred stole after him like a spirit.

"Will he live?" she whispered. "Will he live, doctor?"

"He will live, madam," said the doctor, gravely, "but he will not get well immediately. You will have to nurse him carefully."

"Thank Heaven, that he will live!" said the wife. "I can bear him to be an invalid—I can bear anything better than to lose him!"

Vernon went out with the physician. As they gained the street he said:

"So you think Park will live, doctor? He looks like a man who has got his death-blow."

"He has!" said the doctor. "He will live a few months, as I told his wife, then he will die. His spine has received an irreparable injury. He cannot possibly live a year, and during his few months of life he will be a nearly helpless invalid."

Bidding the doctor good-night, Vernon summoned a cab and proceeded exultingly to his hotel.

His sleek valet Gannard was lounging in his master's room, and regarded Vernon's quick entrance with something of surprise and more of interest.

"Has anything happened?" he demanded. "Was the artist drunk again to-night?"

"Better—a million-fold better!" cried Vernon. "In coming home from Kingston the horse ran away, the drag was overturned, and Park received an injury to his spine from which he cannot recover. He's got his death-blow. He cannot possibly live a year. My work's done in that quarter, Gannard. The first obstacle in my way to the succession to the Trebasil estates is removed!"

Gannard's sleek, smooth face glowed with an answering delight.

"It is better than we could have dared to hope!"

he said. "He will be dead by the time you will have removed the other obstacles. Now only Miss Charlot Lyle and Sir Mark Trebasil require to be removed, and then you have but to take possession of a grand and rich estate, and become one of the richest comoners in Great Britain. Our plan has worked well. Now to consider about Miss Charlot Lyle!"

CHAPTER VI.

BLAIR ABBEY, situated in Cornwall, comprises a grand and gray old pile of monastic buildings, situated, as all old monasteries are, in the midst of a vast and fertile estate.

Half the abbey, including an immense banqueting-hall, a grim chapel, long dormitories and stone cells, with vaults and crypts beneath, is now an ivy-mantled ruin in which ghosts are believed, by the good country-people, to stalk about at unholy hours.

Many a strange story is told of the old Abbey, and devoutly believed throughout the country-side, and in the books of old English legends one of the Headless Monk of Blair Abbey occupies a conspicuous place and is remarkable for its blood-curdling horrors.

One half the building has, however, been transformed into a modern dwelling, which is prettily in all its appointments.

It is provided with wide windows, many of them bowed, and possesses conservatories, greenhouses, vineyards, orchid-houses, pineries, and other appendages of modern luxuries.

The ruined portion of the Abbey is hemmed in closely by the ancient trees of the park. The modernized half is surrounded by terraces enclosed with marble balustrades, and approached from each lower terrace by broad marble steps, with flower-gardens and velvety lawns, and around and beyond all lies the great park, like a green and living frame, enclosing a picture of unparalleled beauty.

The owner of Blair Abbey was a dwarfed, hump-backed old woman, widowed and childless, named Mrs. Falconer. She lived in state, with a great retinue of servants, and as the entire property was at her absolute disposal, and as she had no near relative, the question who should inherit her wealth was one of vital interest in the neighbourhood. She was surrounded with a crowd of sycophants each eager to win her favour; but as she was peculiarly clear-sighted, none of those would-be inheritors succeeded in their designs.

One drizzling October afternoon, the day after the accident which had resulted so seriously for poor Park, Madame Falconer—as she insisted on being called—sat alone in her grand drawing-room, which, warmed by three fires, lighted by a dozen windows, and furnished with exquisite taste and in a style of great magnificence, was an apartment fitted for the occupancy of a queen.

The mistress of the place, small and withered, with a dark face, lit up by black, malicious eyes, and framed in masses of gray hair, was dressed in a trained robe of black velvet, with trimmings of lace and a profusion of diamond ornaments. She was a weird-looking being, and just now seemed restless and expectant.

She touched a silver knob in the mosaic work of the Venetian table at her side, and an electric bell in some distant portion of the Abbey expressed her command for attendance. Almost directly a tall, beplumed footman made his appearance.

"Send Miss Lyle to me," said Madame Falconer, imperiously.

The man bowed and noiselessly retired. A little later the door again opened, and a young girl came softly into the room.

She was Madame Falconer's companion, an orphan, and poor. She was Charlot Lyle, the obstacle in Vernon's path, to whose destruction, having rid himself of Park, he was now determined to devote himself. She was eighteen years old, with a flower-like face, fair, with golden hair and faintly flushed cheeks, a sweet and lovely girl, whose face was an index of her character.

"Is it not time for the travellers to arrive, Miss Lyle?" demanded Madame Falconer, impatiently. "I have been looking for them during the past hour."

"They will soon be here, madam," said Charlot Lyle, consulting her watch. "Their train was due at Langworth an hour ago."

"And we are only eight miles from Langworth," grumbled Madame Falconer. "They should have been here long before this. I feel a strange longing to see this girl, Miss Lyle. Do you know that, although she is my remote relative, she is the only one being on earth with whom I can claim kinship? If she prove what I hope and expect to find her, I shall make her my heiress."

"I hope you will not be disappointed in her, madam," said Charlot Lyle. "I trust that she will prove a gentle, loving—

"I don't want any neck, clinging, dove-eyed creature to inherit Blair Abbey," interrupted Madame Falconer. "I want her to have black

eyes and black hair, and Adrian Rossitour says that her eyes are jet black, and so is her hair, and that her skin is of a pale olive tint. So far good. I want her to have spirit, to be proud, impetuous, faulty even, not a saint with upturned eyes and without spirit to defend herself. She must have a spirit to rule, else my wealth is not for her. And if she fawn and flatter I shall send her packing in a fortnight. I should like to make this Joliette Stair my heiress. Adrian is rich enough without my property. I think sometimes, Miss Lyle, that I shall not last a great while longer. I am eighty years old, and I think I am very nearly worn out.

Charlot Lyle looked distressed, seeing which Madame Falconer hastened to say :

" You will not be forgotten in my will, Charlot. You have lived with me a year and have been patient with all my whims, and obedient to all my wishes. I shall make some provision for you. By-the-bye Sir Mark Trebasil, my neighbour, is your own cousin. I daresay he will give you a home at Waldgrave Castle when you find yourself in need of a home and protection."

" I have no claim upon Sir Mark Trebasil," said Charlot, flushing. " My mother made a runaway marriage with her music-master, and was cast off by her father and disowned by her brothers and sisters. Sir Mark, I daresay, does not even know of my existence."

" Joliette shall give you a home, then. She will need a companion," said Madame Falconer. " I hope I shall like her. Hark! is not that the carriage? They are come at last!"

Charlot Lyle shared the excitement of her employer.

Hastening to the window, she beheld the family carriage coming up the drive.

" They are come!" she exclaimed. " They are here!"

" Let Bittle come in to me!" commanded Madame Falconer. " I have missed her faithful face. Let Miss Stair be shown up to her room first of all. I wish to see my maid first!"

Charlot Lyle went out and gave the necessary orders.

The carriage drew up to the porch, and Adrian Rossitour assisted Joliette Stair to alight.

Madame Falconer's serving-woman, Joliette's duenne during the journey, disdained assistance, and clambered out by herself.

Rossitour conducted Joliette into a great hall, with marble flooring and frescoed walls, and the Tyrolean girl showed not the faintest sign of surprise at the grandeur of the home she had entered.

She was met by the housekeeper, who begged leave to conduct her to her room, and Joliette followed her guidance.

A footman conducted Rossitour to his own apartments, for Madame Falconer was a devout believer in forms and ceremonies, and did not permit herself to be lightly approached.

Mrs. Bittle, the serving-woman, receiving a message from a footman, passed into the drawing-room.

Charlot Lyle had withdrawn, and Madame Falconer was alone.

Mrs. Bittle approached her aged mistress with a courtesy and a look of delight, and respectfully kissed her hand.

The serving-woman was a tall, gaunt north-country woman, bony and hollow-cheeked, devoted to her mistress, single-hearted, faithful, and honest, one of those rare beings who serve honestly and with dog-like fidelity, finding their chief happiness in the glory of their employer. She would have given her life for Madame Falconer, and was jealous of her mistress's affections, solicitous for her comfort, and especially anxious lest she should be imposed upon by some of the flatterers ever hovering around her.

" I am glad to see you back, Bittle," said Madame Falconer, with genuine pleasure. " I have missed you much. So you brought Miss Stair."

" Yes, madam. She joined me at Munich, under charge of a German lady, a pastor's sister."

" You have excellent judgment, Bittle," said Madame Falconer. " You know with what ideas and hopes I sent for my god daughter. What is she?"

" She is very like you in disposition, madam," answered the serving-woman. " She is proud, yet sweet; impetuous, brave, truthful, loving—I cannot find words warm enough to speak her praise. She will bring sunshine to the old Abbey and be a daughter to you."

A glow of pleasure reddened the sallow, withered and wrinkled cheeks of the old lady.

" I like your description of her," she said. " How does she compare with Miss Lyle?"

" Miss Lyle is like a robin or wren," said Bittle.

" Miss Stair is an untamed young eagle!"

" Good! good! The eaglet for me!" cried Madame Falconer. " How does she seem to regard Rossitour?"

" As brother. There is no thought of other love between them, madam."

" Hump! She can make a better match, although Adrian is a noble fellow, and worthy any woman. Bittle, I have a fancy that I shall make this girl my heiress, and try to bring about a marriage between her and Sir Mark Trebasil, if the baronet ever comes home from his wanderings. But I am getting ahead too fast. I have not yet seen the girl, I must remember. Go and help her dress, Bittle, and then send her to me!"

She dismissed the servant-woman and re-called Miss Lyle.

Half an hour later a footman threw open the door, announcing Mr. Rossitour.

Almost immediately after Rossitour had exchanged greetings with his godmother, the door was again opened and the footman announced Miss Stair.

Rossitour advanced and gave Joliette his arm, leading her towards Madame Falconer.

Joliette was dressed in white silk, which Mrs. Bittle had bought for her in Paris, and a wide, gold-coloured sash was tied about her waist, and a gold-coloured ribbon was wound through her jet-black hair. Her big jolly eyes were glowing like lamps. A soft glow tinged her pale, olive skin.

Proud yet sweet, with a rare and witching beauty, with a noble brow, a pure, sensitive mouth, a graceful carriage, a mien half haughty, half pleading, she seemed to Madame Falconer imperially lovely, and her heart went out to her at once in a tenderness that half-frightened her.

" She is what I would have longed for in a child of my own," thought the aged lady, with a sigh. " I wonder if I could win her love!"

It would not prove a hard task. Poor Joliette had known little of love since her father's death, save that fatal passion for Sir Mark Trebasil that had fallen like a blight upon her young life. Sir Mark was her husband of a month, but he had repudiated and disowned her, and she felt that all her love for him had turned to hatred. Forlorn at heart, lonely and sorrowful, she was in a mood to welcome the love of Madame Falconer, and to return it with thousandfold interest.

" Come nearer, dear," said the aged lady, holding out her hand. " Your father is dead, and you are alone in the world, Adrian tells me. I sent for you to be my companion, something as Charlot Lyle is. I welcome you as my adopted daughter, Joliette. Do you think you can love me as a daughter should love a mother?"

Joliette looked into the bright, malicious eyes of Madame Falconer, into the parchment-like face, and saw beneath the wrinkles and furrows, beneath the hardness and malice, a lonely old soul longing for a real, true love, a daughter's care and devotion, and her warm heart thrilled as she said :

" I love you now, dear godmother. I will be your daughter, if you will have me."

She put up her fresh young mouth for a kiss, and the withered dame caressed her with an emotion she did not care to conceal.

" You hear?" she said, looking around her, and taking Joliette's hand within her own. " Joliette Stair is my adopted daughter. She is the only one of my kin left to me in all the world. She belongs to me henceforth. Joliette, dear, this is Charlot Lyle, my companion. You two young creatures will be friends at once. Adrian, I feel that I am renewing my youth. The old Abbey will know again the gaieties of the past. I feel that the Abbey and I have alike taken a new lease of life."

Joliette and Charlot clasped hands. They were friends at once, as Madame Falconer had prophesied. And as they stood there, one dark and dangerously sweet, with the warm beauty of the tropics, the other fair, with the colder beauty of northern climes, a sudden, strange and inexplicable shadow fell upon the spirits of both, as if some warning prescience had come to them that each was alike menaced by one unknown secret enemy—as if some unseen foe were already weaving a web which was to ensnare them both to their destruction.

(To be continued.)

A HINT ABOUT LOOKING GLASSES.—It is a fact well worth knowing, but which does not seem to be generally understood, that the amalgam of tin foil with mercury, which is spread on glass plates to make looking-glasses, is very readily crystallized by actinic solar rays. A mirror hung where the sun can shine on it is usually spoiled; it takes a granulated appearance familiar to housekeepers, though they may not be acquainted with the cause of the change. In such a state the article is nearly worthless, the continuity of the surface is destroyed, and it will not reflect outlines with any approach to precision. Care must therefore be exercised in hanging. Care should also be taken in selecting looking-glasses; we have seen many lately, and from various manufacturers, too, which makes every straight line round. There is something wrong in the manufacture which requires looking into.

SMALL MEANS.—The power of money is on the whole over-estimated. The greatest things which have

been done for the world have not been accomplished by rich men, or by subscription lists, but by men generally of small means. The greatest thinkers, discoverers, inventors and artists have been men of moderate wealth, many of them little raised above the condition of manual labourers, in point of worldly circumstances. And it will always be so. Riches are often an impediment than a stimulus to action, and in many cases they are quite as much a misfortune as a blessing. The youth who inherits wealth is apt to have life made too easy for him, and he soon grows satiated with it because he has nothing left to desire. Having no special object to struggle for, he finds time heavy on his hands; remains morally and mentally asleep; and his position in society is often no higher than that of a polypus over which the tide floats.

SCIENCE.

FATTY MATTERS IN CAST IRON.—An experiment made long ago by Proust revealed the fact that fatty matters can be extracted from cast iron when the latter is dissolved in certain acids. M. Cloez has recently separated these materials in a pure state, and their analysis reveals the interesting fact that they consist of carburets of hydrogen. This is a veritable organic synthesis, realized by the aid of substances purely mineral, and is susceptible consequently of important applications.

STRENGTH OF GLASS TUBES.—M. Caffetet has found that a tube of thin glass, 2½ inches in length and three-quarters of an inch in diameter, was crushed by an exterior pressure of 1,155 lbs. to the square inch, while similar tubes were burst by an interior pressure one-half less. In making use of very thick glass, capable of resisting a pressure of four or five hundred atmospheres, he found the glass to sustain no permanent change of form. Upon this fact, he purposes the construction of a very sensitive and very simple manometer.

ELECTRIC LOCKS.—This invention relates to the application of electricity to locks in such a manner that the lock, when properly secured, can only be opened by the proper key, and, moreover, any attempt to manipulate the lock by means of another key or any other instrument will be indicated by the condition in which the lock is left by such attempt. This invention, which is patented, relates, first, to the peculiar arrangement of two magnets and circuits in combination with the lock and with a voltaic battery; secondly, to a contrivance for insulating the pin or other part of the lock with which the key is in contact when inserted into the same from the other parts of the lock; and, thirdly, to the peculiar construction of the keys for operating the said locks.

EBONY FROM SEA-WEED.—It may interest some of our readers who reside near the sea-coast to learn that there is considerable commercial value in the common sea-weeds which are thrown up so abundantly on the shore. In addition to their uses as a manure and for packing, quantities are now converted into artificial ebony. The process consists in first treating the plants for two hours with dilute sulphuric acid, then drying and grinding them up. To sixty parts of this product five parts of liquid glue, five parts of gutta-percha, and two and a half parts of india-rubber are to be added, the latter two being first dissolved in naphtha. Afterwards ten parts of cold-tar, five parts of pulverized sulphur, and five parts of pulverized resin are added, and the whole heated to about 300 degrees Fahr. When cooled a mass is obtained which in colour, hardness, and capacity for receiving a polish resembles ebony, and is much cheaper. This material is now actually made on a large scale, and used for nearly all the purposes to which ebony can be applied.

EFFECT OF COMPRESSED AIR ON THE BODY.—Investigations into the physiological effect of compressed air upon the human body have brought some interesting facts to notice. It appears that some divers in German mines noticed below water a giddiness, and pains in eyes and ears, at a depth of only thirty feet, though many have descended over 130 feet. Professor Rouroux, of Strasburg, supposes that the blood gases, carbonic acid, nitrogen and oxygen, are strongly compressed by the pressure upon the lungs and blood vessels, and when this pressure suddenly ceases they at once expand and act just as air bubbles which are introduced in the air vessels, namely, they cause pains, fits or death. This view has been confirmed by various experiments, and the conclusion is that a diver can be exposed without danger to a pressure of five atmospheres—75 pounds per inch—or 130 feet of water, while at 230 or 280 feet danger is imminent. Under all circumstances, it is well established as a principle that only perfectly healthy persons should be admitted to work in highly compressed air.

IRON AND COAL DEPOSITS IN CENTRAL INDIA.—Mr. Walter Ness, who is now superintending the

working of the collieries in the Warora district, Central India, has written a letter, in which he states that the mineral deposits in the country in which he now finds himself are marvellously rich. He writes: "We have now in one field of 1,000 acres a couple of seams one of which is fifteen and the other twenty feet thick. Sometimes the two seams are close together. They have a great resemblance to the Staffordshire thick coal. There are other parts of the coal field where the seam is from fifty to sixty feet thick. So you see the bulk is all right. I have just got a few tons of coal, and shall be able to know more of its quality by-and-by. But I was recently out on the iron ore about forty miles east of Warora. I never saw anything like them. The ore yields over seventy per cent. of metallic iron, being magnetic. If the coal and iron ore can be converted into iron, or the one made to convert the other, it will be a great thing. There are millions of tons of this ore on the surface."

SOLIDIFIED TEA.—A novel mode of preparing tea for the retail trade, consisting in compressing the leaf into blocks, has been patented in America. The advantages of the solidified tea, as it is termed, consist in a gain, claimed to be from 30 to 40 per cent. in the process of solidifying, both in strength and flavour. The reason ascribed is that the enormous pressure brought to bear on the leaf crushes the small cells, which contain the essential strength and real flavour of the tea, which is, to a great extent, wasted in using tea not so treated. The essential property in tea, has a tendency to prevent the decay of bone, hence the natural craving after tea by most elderly persons. Now the inventor considers that the process of solidifying thoroughly brings to the surface the theine in tea, thus rendering it medicinally superior to the article not so treated. The many properties thus set free also insure, it is believed, an efficacious antidote to nervousness. As much strength is obtained in five minutes from the solidified tea, it is claimed, as can be drawn out of the same tea, not solidified, in five hours. The tablet, weighing four ounces, is divided into half-ounces, so that the consumer can calculate how much should be used in a week or a month. Thus prepared, the tea is necessarily genuine, and cannot be adulterated. It is sold in a form that makes waste, deterioration, or loss of aroma, it is claimed, impossible.

TRANSPARENT PHOTOGRAPHS.—A laundress's flat iron is, perhaps, the most convenient thing that can be made available for mounting the print upon the glass—using a bit of bibulous paper between the iron and the print to absorb the superfluous paraffin. Such a mounting may be very usefully employed for securing the soft effect produced by placing a second picture behind the transparency. In this method of manipulating it will be necessary to melt the paraffin, and perhaps the following mixture may be utilized with advantage, as it is fluid at ordinary temperatures, or, if not so, the warmth of the hand will render it liquid. The small quantity of Canadian balsam is introduced for the purpose of making the print more adhesive to the glass; but we really have grave doubts as to its proving of any great advantage in practice, because even this substance is, to a certain extent, amenable to the action of light and oxygen: Paraffin 2 drachms, benzole 5 fluid drachms, Canadian balsam half a fluid drachm. The paraffin should be melted, removed some distance from the light, and four fluid drachms of the benzole added during agitation. The Canadian balsam is to be dissolved in the other drachm of benzole, and the whole is then to be mixed together. Paraffin and Canadian balsam do not mix very well; but with interposition of the menstruum, benzole, they seem to blend perfectly. The advantages of such a mixture as the above are that it can be applied cold with a brush, and that it dries perfectly in a very short time if the benzole be of good quality. To perfect the adhesion, however, we would recommend that the warm iron should be passed over the surface after it is quite dry. Such an operation also ensures the volatilization of any traces of the benzole that might remain. The same solution might, perhaps, be used with advantage to preserve prints from atmospheric influence.

SPECTRUM OF THE COMET.—Father Secchi has observed the spectrum of Coggini's comet, and finds the lines of carbonic oxide and carbonic acid very brilliant. The same astronomer notes a curious phenomenon which recently happened in Jupiter's first satellite. The atmosphere at the time of observation was quite clear, and the disc of the planet, while plainly defined, presented a slightly wavy surface. As the satellite neared the edge of Jupiter, and had advanced so that a distance of about one of its diameters separated it from the same, the observer was surprised to see the disc apparently extend itself towards the satellite, touch it, and then retract. This to-and-fro motion continued until the satellite was completely obscured by the planet, a period of

four or five minutes. Father Secchi suggests that if similar undulations of the solar disc take place at the time of the passage of Venus, there will be strong elements of uncertainty in the observations, and that it would be desirable to employ means which will reduce to a minimum these effects of atmospheric oscillation. Dr. Allatt, dating from Frant on the 18th ult., states: "The comet since its first appearance has been throughout its course on this altitude, 5541 ft. above the mean level of the sea, a most wonderful object. Last night (Friday) at ten o'clock the nucleus was entirely lost in the northern horizon, but the tail, or coma, was of enormous magnitude, both as to its elongation and lateral extension. The preternatural brilliancy of the stars betokened a pell-mell atmosphere, and the coma appeared as an auroral streamer reaching from the horizon almost to the Great Bear, and rivalling in distinctness the fainter portions of the Via Lactea. I have seen most of the famous comets of the present century, and none, I think, have approached the one now visible in length and breadth of the luminous vapour which constitutes the coma."

LOVE'S ARGOSY.

ALLAN and I sat in the embrasure of the oriel window, looking seaward, and dreaming I knew not what beautiful dreams of longed-for, unattainable things—such visions as dance before our eyes when life is young, and all glorious possibilities lie close in the future, within easy reach of one's hand; when the season is always summer, and the heart sings all day like a bird; before we have learnt the delusion, the mockery, the hollow shame of life, or ever have seen our sweetest hopes trampled down by the swift-coming, relentless years; looking out longingly towards the sea, lingering near it, and interweaving it with all our dreams—Allan, because he was to be a sailor, and seek his fortune afar over its shining waves, and I, because, being only a girl, with a foolish fondness for worshipping something, I had found nothing better than to fall in love with this blue, beautiful world that lay before my eyes, for ever restless, like my own unquiet heart, and all glowing with splendour and charged with vitality and conscious power, as I would have had my own life be.

There were three of us at home. Not that it was in any refined sense a home for me. Its roof sheltered me; I was fed at its table; I was lectured and scolded at suitable intervals; my interests were properly taken care of—at least, I suppose they were, for my Uncle Ralph informed me from time to time that the little fortune left me by my father was wisely invested, and would make a pretty dowry when I married—if I ever did. But I used to notice that Aunt Lou was apt, when this contingency was mentioned, to lift her eyebrows rather expressively, and I guessed that she considered me an unpromising subject. I know that it was a trial to her that my feet were so large, my elbows so red and my shoulders so broad and strong.

Aunt Lou was the pink of propriety. She always thought twice before she spoke once, which of course gave her a great advantage over ordinary impulsive mortals, who are so indiscreet as to say whatever comes uppermost; then, when she did speak, it was with such precision and emphasis and accuracy that one was forced to wonder. Monosyllables were her detestation; great sonorous Latin words marched in orderly fashion from her lips, and bent themselves to the commonest uses, so that trivial, everyday matters were invested with a sort of sham dignity, as ludicrous as it was unnatural. Personally, she was like a picture by one of the old English masters, in her lukewarm black silk dress, unrelied by a single ornament, except the long gold chain, starred here and there with diamonds, that fell in loops over her bosom, and the little ruffles of old lace at her throat and wrists, fine and yellow and filmy as sea mosses.

Of my uncle I don't know much. I'm inclined to think that he was chiefly important to the world outside as representing a certain number of thousands, and that a clay figure or man of straw would have answered the purpose just as well. At home he was ambiguous and oracular. He wore upright collars, his boots creaked grandly, and altogether he was as pompous an old gentleman as was to be found.

And so, in such society, I had told off sixteen years of my life, as soberly as a nun tells the beads upon her rosary, when there came a change.

I was down at the shore one day, seeking a new eyrie among the rocks. The old ones had become tame. I had sat in the great hollows, and watched the in-coming tide beat against the tall basaltic cliffs, and seen the curling lines of surf, afar up the shingly beach, break into foamy blossoms, as bright as those which whitened the fields in June, until I knew every varying tint and shape by heart; and to-night, driven by some wild impulse, I ven-

tured farther out, stepping cautiously from rock to rock, across little soothng pools, where the tide pouring in had left a handful of water—on and on, the whole length of the sharp rocky point that ran seaward, until I stopped upon the outermost edge, careless of any danger, never thinking, indeed, of my own boldness, because I was so absorbed in the lonely grandeur of the scene.

Half turning to look landward, a tall, dark figure stood out for a moment in the red light, outlined as if upon canvas—a straight, erect figure, whose knightly carriage struck me even there; but while I looked the purple clouds settled heavily down, and the great desolate waste of waters lay dun and dark, and the rocks and sands, and even the white gulls, flying leisurely about, faded away in the gloom. The figure faded too, and I started a little, with a vague alarm, that vanished as soon as it came.

I sat down among the rocks, scooping up the water idly in my hand, and singing a low, chanting accompaniment to the slow song of the sea. And so sitting there, something touched me on the shoulder. I started up, with a cry upon my lips. A tall figure was beside me; a dark, stern, bearded face was looking down on me—a face that was new and strange to me.

"You are a bold girl!" the stranger said, a smile breaking across the sternness, and changing the whole character of the face.

"Am I? Why?"

And I looked around for signs of danger.

"Don't you see?" he asked, pointing backward.

But I had seen, and the blood went inward to my heart, and I could no more have stirred than if I were dead. Around and behind us theullen waters were swaying to and fro—no longer any sharp rock showing above the surface, but a dark unbroken waste of waves.

"Cut off by the tide!"

Those were the words my pallid lips tried to frame. I thought they went out in a shout; but I knew afterwards that I uttered them in a hoarse whisper. He answered me as if I had spoken aloud.

"Yes, we—or you—are cut off by the tide."

Glancing down at his clothing, I saw that it was drenched. He wore a heavy pilot's cloak, and both that and the brim of the hat that shaded his face were dripping with wet.

"How came you here?" I asked.

"I saw you from the cliff yonder, and had some curiosity as to what kind of a mermaid this might be, and when, apprehending that you might have some difficulty in returning, I came down to the shore, I found that the neck of the peninsula was already overflowed," he said, quietly.

"How are we to get back?" I asked.

"How? A mermaid ask that question? Haven't I seen you by the far wash of Southern seas, combing your purple-black hair, and often on moonlight nights, when the waves were phosphorescent, and the Spice Islands shook their perfume over miles and miles of ocean, have not your glittering eyes looked up at me, all luminous in the gleaming wake of the ship, putting the lustre of the waves to shame—and now are you dismayed at the thought of swimming twenty rods or so?" he said, in a light, laughing tone.

I was only a woman, after all, with all my hardihood, and the darkness and the hoarse thunder of the surf were terrible.

"You are cruel!" I cried, with a vehement impulse. "I am frightened, and you make fun of me."

It was so dark now that I could not see his face, but I heard the quick speak for my forgiveness—knew, as one knows things in a dream, that his voice softened to the utmost tenderness, and then—perhaps I fainted.

The darkness that was all around me deepened into palpable gloom; the thunder of the surf grew and grew, till it swelled into a continuous roar; and—still as if in a dream—I seemed borne over mountains of waves, and on and across rocky uneven paths, and over miles of level land, and then, all at once, the noise of the surf died away, and about me it grew bright, and it was the voice of the housekeeper, shrill and surprised, which said, close to my ear:

"Miss Katherine, you've been and got drowned, just as I always said you would! My goodness—and if you ain't as white as a sheet! How on earth did you do it?"

My wits were still wandering, and I made no reply, but an impudent voice said:

"It is no matter how she did it. Get her upstairs, and give her restoratives immediately."

And so, with infinite hurry and worry and bluster, I was got upstairs, my wet garments were taken off, a glass of rosy Amontillado was given me, and still it was like a dream. I remember my aunt standing beside me, looking down with discomposed face, and I caught the sheen of th



[CUT OFF BY THE TIDE.]

long gold chain, as the loops swept my pillow, and then I fell asleep.

There was a soft glow in the room when I awoke, and a genial warmth was in the air, but I was alone. I sat up, and remembered it all. Then I arose, and just as I was dressed the bell in the hall sounded for dinner.

I stepped out into the entry. It was all right, and the light streamed up warm and mellow from the hall below, and I heard the servants passing to and fro, and caught the hum of cheerful conversation. I went downstairs softly, curious and wondering.

The drawing-room doors were wide open; the broad-lined covers, in which the chairs and sofas were wont to veil their splendour from profane eyes, had disappeared, and in their stead the crimson velvet shone royally. The splendid mirrors were like luecent lakes in the white light that flooded the rooms. Afar down the apartments, standing out against the background of window drapery, I saw a figure that I knew, and I went down towards it, somewhat timidly and uncertainly.

"Your cousin, Allan Graham, and Mrs. Graham, your aunt, have come—some young ladies, also, and two or three children," said my aunt, answering the question in my eyes. "Pull the lace of your sleeves down—it is rumpled—and don't thrust your elbows out so, and do try and stand up straight, and don't bring your shoulders forward."

I shrank out of sight, in a corner by the sofa, and sat down upon a hassock, hoping to hide my elbows and my shoulders and my whole ungainly self; yet thinking with all my might about this cousin Allan Graham, whom I had never seen, who was the embodiment of all manly graces and accomplishments (according to Aunt Lee) who was to go abroad, and make his fortune in the Indies, and who was (still according to Aunt Lee) to return and marry my beautiful cousin Blanche, now and for many years past away at school—Blanche, whose charms were

constantly vaunted for my admiration, whose style was unexceptionable, and in marked contrast to my own, said Aunt Lee, upon whose manners I was to model mine, and whose foil I was perfectly calculated to be.

Not that I cared much about Cousin Blanche; her pink-and-white waxen beauty, her bad French, her execrable music, her supercilious airs, were not much to me; I was used to them. But this Allan Graham, whom I had not seen, and whom I had endowed with all sorts of knightly qualities—my heart beat quick and fast at the thought of meeting him. And now, while my cheeks were glowing at the thought, somebody at the far end of the room said:

"She is there yonder, just by the sofa in the corner."

Then a quick step upon the carpet, and my aunt presented us in stately form. A kiss swept my cheek.

"How do you do, my little cousin?"

I started. Was I dreaming again? Could this handsome stranger, in evening dress, be the rough man in the pilot-cloak who rescued me from that terrible impending death? The dark eyes looked smilingly down into my face.

"How are you now?" he said, kindly. "This warmth and light are something better than the chill and gloom of that rocky eyrie of yours."

"I don't know," I said, quietly.

"Don't know!"

He looked at me in surprise.

"I have been very happy there," I answered; and there our conversation ended, for a troop of ladies came flocking in and crowding around Allan Graham.

There were not many of them, but the amplitude and splendour of their attire gave an exaggerated impression of their number. There were the sheer and rustle of silk, floating muslin, transparent and filmy as cobwebs, the lustre of jewels, and the beauty of bright eyes, and lovely complexions. They came around Allan Graham all smiling and merry laughter,

chattering as volubly as magpies, and a thousand times more musically.

I felt very small and insignificant, and would have glided away and hid myself in a sudden access of diffidence, had not Allan Graham drawn me forward and introduced me in a manner that compelled their civility.

I could have cried with thankfulness for that and for the genuine kindness that followed me all that evening. Was I quite overshadowed and left out in the cold by those haughty dames? Allan missed me, and there was always a seat close by him for me. It was he who covered my confusion and made me, in spite of my embarrassment, a part of the company.

The next morning I was up and out before any one was stirring. Everything was blithe and beautiful as if the world had had a new baptism; the sad song of the sea was a glad triumphal hymn of joy. The waves, that last night were so gloomily black, were now as blue as the summer heaven, and a grave now under their smooth, shining surface did not seem now half so terrible. And so, looking over the sea, I sang softly to myself a verse of an old song I had learned years before:

"When the sun is low in the rosy sky,
And in restful ease the wild waves lie,
I watch for my love who is coming to me
From over the sea, the purple sea—
I wait and watch for the argosy
That shall bring my dear love home to me."

Just at the last word a pebble fell from a high rock, leaping from cliff to cliff, as a careless foot had sent it whirling. I started, and looked around.

"When do you expect him?" said Allan Graham, as composedly as if he was continuing a conversation long ago begun.

"Never!" I answered, laughingly.

"Don't tell me that," he said, shaking his head with mock sternness. "You are thinking he may come at any time. But there is no sail in sight."

My eyes went wandering away towards the horizon, now rich and glowing in the golden light.

"No, there is no sail in sight," I said, dreamily.

"I suspect this lover is a mythical personage," said Allan, suddenly.

I laughed.

"I suspect so too. But then I don't mind confessing that I've always had a presentiment that if any good fortune is ever to come to me, it will come from over the sea," I said.

A curious smile lit up his face.

"Indeed! Young ladies' presentiments are solemn things. I think just so," he said, very soberly.

"Mr. Graham, you are laughing at me."

"Miss Abercrombie, I am not."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, don't you know that some day I expect to sail away over yonder sea in search of my fortune?"

"No, I don't know much about you."

"That is singular. I know all about you," the brown eyes flashing a smile.

I shook my head.

"I don't think you do," I said.

"Why not?"

"Because no one does. But never mind me. Tell me where you are going, and what you mean to do."

"Oh, I shall follow the morning star till I touch the shores of farthest Ind; or I shall go with the White Nile up to its source in the heart of those tawny mountains that lie under the Equator; or I shall drive my ship down towards the frozen Southern Ocean, and try to wrench from its icy hands its age-kept secrets; and I shall send you home diamonds from Hindostan, pearls from Ceylon, rubies from Burmah, sapphires from Brazil—"

"Oh, don't!" I cried. "Before you will have seen all these places I shall be an old, old woman, whom diamonds and rubies will ill become."

"Or your argosy will have come from over the sea, and there will be no room for my gifts. But, speaking of jewels—do you know that your cousin Blanche is coming home?"

"No," I said, surprised.

"And I am told that she is a jewel—a pearl of the purest water," he continued; "set in gold, too, little cousin. And I believe it is on the programme that I shall fall in love with and marry her."

"Is it?" I said, drily.

"It is, indeed. And of course I am very anxious to do it."

"Are you?"

"Am I? Miss Abercrombie, is it against your principles to utter more than two words at a time, or do they naturally go in pairs, as the animals entered Noah's ark?"

I laughed, but was feeling rather uncomfortable.

"What would you have me do?" I asked.

"How can you ask?" he returned. "I come to you with my interesting matrimonial plans—marriage is always interesting to young ladies of sixteen,

is it not?—and I expect to find in you a sympathetic listener. That little romantic song of yours gave me a right to expect it, you know. Then, too, perhaps I thought you would give me some idea of my pearl. You know her, don't you?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Won't you describe her?" he said, smiling.

"I'm afraid I can't do her justice."

"Try. Have mercy upon my curiosity. Think what a state I am in. Now then—blonde or dark?"

"Blonde."

"Thank you. We are getting on bravely. Can't you give me ten words next time? You are not upon oath, you know; so you needn't be so very circumspect," he said, in a tone of real vexation.

"Well, then," I said, smiling, "I'll tell you about her; but you must promise me not to blame me if the picture fall short of the reality."

"Very good. I promise. Now shade your eyes with both hands, look into that little dark pool in the hollow of the rock, and tell me what you see," he said, playfully.

"I see a graceful figure, the head poised upon the slender shoulders as a lily upon its stem. Something in its carriage, something in the droop of the head—yet still thrown back—gives one the idea of pride, as well as languor. The complexion, too, is like a lily, white and creamy. The hair falls low over the forehead—the forehead is just an inch high, and the eyebrows are straight and delicate—but the hair—a rich, glowing red, like the cheek of a rasset apple in the sunshine—"

"My dear, there is no such thing as red hair. You must mean gold."

"Don't interrupt me! This hair falls down so heavily, in such splendid abundance, that it seems to weigh upon the low forehead. Perhaps this is why the eyes are seldom lifted, and rarely look frankly into yours—or perhaps it is because the eyes themselves are not beautiful—they are green eyes, with yellow irises, like a cat's—"

"Little slanderer!"

"And so are fair to hide themselves under the white lids, which are lovely as a Circassian girl's."

I looked up here, stopping short. His eyes were bent upon the ground, and his face was clouded.

"Well?" he said, starting up.

"My picture is completed."

"I beg your pardon. Only the material portion of it. You have said nothing of mind, disposition, accomplishments, education. What! Are you going thus?" as I rose to go.

I was going, I said; and I went. But this tête-à-tête upon the rocks was only the avant-courier of a hundred others, that grew more intimate and confidential as the summer wore on.

In the long delicious day, when the blue sky, all filled with golden warmth, hung over the blue sea; in the sultry evenings, and in the early mornings, when the tender light of dawn first flushed the east, we were always together, or floating in his boat when the winds were quiet, or in the odorous silence of the garden, or in the rocky hollows of the shore—always knowing him more, and finding more to pique and interest me—never quite understanding him, but drawn to him by a blind, resistless instinct, as the tide follows the moon around the world. Yet at times I was brusque and cold. The hold which this new interest had taken up frightened me. I called it foolish presumption—nay, worse—for was not Allan going to wed my beautiful cousin?

At last, one day, my dream was rudely snapped in twain. Aunt Lee, sitting in stately silence at the head of the table, said, solemnly:

Blanche is coming home. Madame's term closed on Wednesday last, and Blanche will be at the station this evening. Can you go for her, Allan?"

I did not know why Allan's eyes met mine, nor why I flushed and grew pale. But I was cool and quiet enough, when, meeting Allan in the library, after breakfast, he said:

"Will you drive with me to the station this evening?"

"No, I thank you."

"And why? No, I thank you, may I ask?"

"Because I have letters to write, and—"

"Well?"

"A book to read—and some work to do." "In short," he said, testily, "you are determined to find some reason for not going. You will not be present at the meeting between my love and me," he added, in a scathing tone.

"Your love and you would, I fear, find me de trop," I answered, irritated by his manner. "Love-making is a pretty pastime, no doubt, but it can hardly be interesting to spectators."

His face brightened. I caught the gleam of a satisfied smile. What foolish thing had I said now? I went away, vexed and mortified. Should I never learn self-control, I wondered?

That night, when I came home from a long, lonely ramble, I heard the piano, and knew at once that Blanche had come. Passing one of the open drawing-room windows, I saw her lily face, with its halo of strangely bright air, and I saw Allan, with folded arms and bent head, listening with rapt attention.

When I went down, by-and-by, Blanche came to meet me, but Allan sat still on the sofa. How queenly she was, and how sweet in her gracious beauty! What a rare charm she threw around everything she did!

"You look as you always did, Katherine, dear. You haven't changed the least bit in the world—has she, mamma?" Katherine is an Abercrombie—not at all like us—do you think she is, Cousin Allan?" she said, in her pretty, languid way.

Allan lifted himself up from the sofa, threw a sharp glance at Blanche, and answered, shortly:

"No!"

The tone was so gruff that Blanche lifted her eyebrows in surprise, and her inch of white forehead grew wrinkled to the extent of its capacity.

"What bear it is!" she cried, in mellifluous laughter. "Katherine, what have you been about? Before I have been here a week, sir, I shall tame you," she said, menacing him with her fan.

Allan shrugged his shoulders, and pretended to be greatly terrified, while Aunt Lee smiled complacently, and Uncle Ralph gave a little pompous snort as who should say there was any doubt that Blanche would tame him?

And, indeed, for weeks it seemed very much as if she had done so. He followed her about as if he was tied to her girdle; he turned her music; he plied the oars whenever she felt inclined to row; he was her cavalier in many a gay ride; he played the Romeo to her Juliet in the most unexceptional manner; yet in it all, through all his gallantry and courteous deference, even in the admiration which he allowed her to see, there was a haughty withholding of himself, an occasional reticence and reserve, which I could not understand. But he was always kind to me, following me wifely with his eyes, and never letting me miss the little attentions that before Blanche came were only given to me.

And so the summer went, and the sweet warm nights and long delicious days were over; autumn came ruddy and bright. Then there were gay evening parties; belles rode out from town, and their brilliancy was eclipsed by Blanche's splendour. There were tableaux, charades, mimic theatricals, and at last a masquerade.

It was an October evening, a reminiscence of the summer just gone. All the windows were open, coloured lights were hung in the garden walks, and fantastically dressed people were all about; here a lady, looking as if she had just stepped from a portrait frame, contemporary with the great Elizabeth; Spanish hidalgoes and Eastern princes lounged about in handsome picturesque costumes; Lancelot and Guinevere played at love-making under the trees; there were peasant girls, with "soft blue eyes" peering through their masks, and stately dames in brocade, covered with gold and jewels that had been imprisoned in gloom for fifty years.

I was dressed as a nun, my secret known only to Blanche, who was a Turkish princess.

"Where is Allan?" she said to me, in a sharp whisper. "I have been trying to discover him all the evening, but cannot."

"I thought the tall knight yonder, in the black domino, was he," I replied.

"Pooh! That is Will Bretton. Then you don't know?"

"I don't know," I answered; and then I strolled out into the grounds.

As I went down one of the garden walks a tall figure confronted me—a monk, in gown and cowl. His shoulders were stooping, and the hands that grasped his staff were old and shrunken. He accosted me standing in the path, so that I could not escape him.

"My daughter," he said, "you are in trouble. You droop, you bend beneath a weight. What can I do for you?"

I listened intently—the voice was so strange, yet familiar. But it was not Allan, I thought, after a moment's reflection.

"Thank you, good father," I said, lightly; "but I am in no need of your holy offices. This fillet which binds my veil is indeed somewhat heavy and close; but otherwise I am in no trouble. My heart is as light as a thistledown."

"Daughter, be careful," he said, gravely. "That was a white one, and so was the other, and two white ones make a black one."

"But of what troubles does your reverence suspect me? Is your reverence aware of my advantages? I have plenty to eat, to drink, and to wear. What more can I need?"

"Love, my daughter; love, without which no life is complete."

"Love," I echoed, scornfully, "I have nothing to do with. 'Tis an illusory cheat, not for a moment to be compared with a thousand other things."

"For instance—what?"

"Wealth, fame, position, power; these are tangible realities, but love is a myth."

I felt that he was watching me with close attention.

Was it Allan seeking to probe my thoughts, to gratify curiosity or vanity? My pride took fire at the thought. I went on, laughingly:

"Pardon me, father. I do believe in love—that is, in the love of the old romances—but I doubt if any knight of the present day carries a spell potent enough to awaken it."

"Is that quite true, daughter? Have you never felt—"

"I have felt nothing," I interrupted, impatiently. "All I have said is pure speculation, I assure you. I like to watch a play, but I have no ambition to become an actress."

"Ah! then, undoubtedly, you have watched with much interest the little drama that has been performed under your eyes? You have seen what a devoted lover a certain Sir Nameless can be? You must have sympathized in his admiration of his lady-love's transcendent charms"—now by the touch of irony in the tone I knew it was Allan—"with his profound appreciation of her intelligence, and beauty, and goodness—and you must have felt glad that he is so fortunate, for you have a cousinly interest in him."

"Oh, yes," I said, indifferently.

"And the match will receive your sanction and blessing?"

"If my sanction has any value to them—yes. But I hardly think it has," I said, quietly.

"By the way," said the monk, abruptly, "gossip has given you to this happy lover, do you know?"

"Indeed! Gossip is wrong, as usual. I think it must be a nobler pattern of a man who should win my love," I said, haughtily, and turning away, I sang, softly:

"I wait for my love, who is coming to me
From over the sea, the purple sea;
I wait and watch for the argosy
That shall bring my dear love home to me."

When I looked up again the cowl and hooded figure had disappeared. I went in, perplexed and unhappy. All the rest of the evening passed like a dream, and the guests seemed to pass before me like a long procession, without beginning or end.

And so it grew very late at last, and by-and-by Aunt Lee sent me to find Blanche. She was standing under the great chandelier in the centre of the hall, the white light flowing about her, lighting up her bright hair till it looked afame. Her eyes scintillated through the mask; something was amiss, I guessed. I gave her my aunt's message, and was going.

"Wait!" her hand, cold as ice, clutching mine.

"Well?"

I looked into her glowing eyes. Her lips parted, but before any words could come into that instant of silence there rushed a strange, indescribable sound, that seemed just above our heads; sharp, dry clefts in the air, and I had a sensation of being crushed down and down interminable depths. Then all was darkness and silence. I do not know what followed.

Agree and ages seemed to pass away. Sometimes I could hear whispers around me, and sometimes a word or two would float across my misty consciousness, but vague and unmeaning, and then I would slip away again into the stillness and nothingness.

But one day I opened my eyes, quite myself, and found the living world around me—only there had been a great change.

The yellow sunlight that poured in at my window shimmered across wide fields all white with snow.

Somebody was instantly at my side. I looked up into my aunt's face. It had grown—oh, so old!

"How long have I been lying here?" I asked.

"About two months."

"What is the matter?"

"You were injured by the chandelier which struck you in falling," said my aunt, her stern face softening.

"Where is Blanche?" I said, looking around uneasily.

There was a moment's pause. An awful fear crept into my mind. But my aunt, after that little hesitation, said:

"Blanche, come here!"

Blanche came, but at the first sight of her I covered my face with my hands and burst into tears. The bright redundant hair was cut close; the soft smooth cheeks were marred by great ugly red scars, that tortured and disfigured them.

"Oh, Blanche—I am so sorry!" I cried.

"I had the worst of it," she sobbed. "You were only hurt by the blow, but I was almost killed by the flames. I wish I had died."

Looking up, full of unutterable pity, I saw my aunt's face grow hard as stone, and I knew that all I had suffered—all I could suffer—was as nothing in her eyes compared to the wreck of Blanche's beauty.

That day there was a consultation of the surgeons, and by-and-by I heard the opinion that eventual recovery was certain; in the meantime perfect quiet was enjoined through what must be a long and tedious convalescence. I covered my eyes with my hand, and wearily wondered if it was worth my while.

And so the slow days passed. Why did not Allan come to see me? I asked myself over and over again. Perfect quiet need not exclude everybody; and I longed with a child's longing to see him. Often I was on the point of asking my aunt, but the stony, sphinx-like face froze the words on my lips.

So the time went on, and at last the fields were green, and the red roses that climbed over the window-shelf shone its perfume into the room. Then one day Blanche came to me, her eyes full of happy tears. If this trouble had marred her beauty, it had made her heart better and truer.

"Allan and I are to be married in a week," she said, in a whisper. "He will not let my poor, scarred face keep us apart. Oh, he is so good."

Bitterness and envy were dead. I kissed her, saying:

"His love is, I am sure, noble and true. Heaven bless you both!"

They were married, and went for the wedding tour—over the sea that we two had so often looked out upon, where Allan was to find his fortune; over the purple sea, across whose shining bosom no happy winds were ever to waft my lover home to me—for Allan was gone, and my heart was dead and cold within my bosom. It lived again, long after, in terrible pain, in the bitterness of baffled hope, in desolation and loneliness, in days and nights full of anguish and tears. And then I knew what my love had cost me. But after this everything was easy to bear—the monotony of the years, and then the changes that crowded so fast upon each other.

Uncle Ralph died, and had, according to his directions, a pompous funeral. But when his affairs were looked into it was found that most of his property, including my own legacy, had been swallowed up in speculations.

Before the craze that festooned the walls of the great drawing-room was removed there came a foreign letter, with broad bands of black around its edges.

Blanche was dead!

It passed from lip to lip; the servants, standing about in the hall, were white with awe.

Aunt Lee sat erect and frigid for a moment, and then all at once dropped away limp and motionless, as if life were utterly gone. But it lingered for weeks and weeks, while every avenue to the soul was closed. It was pitiful to see the dumb woe in her eyes. Signs and speech were alike impossible—paralysis had done its work so well—but I noticed how often her eyes would seek the little bulb-table under the pier-glass, and at last I guessed that she meant I should have the jewels that I knew were kept there in a secret drawer.

When all was over, when merciful death at last came to supersede this, its more terrible counterpart, I went one day to the hidden drawer. I drew out the jewels—the great ruby, red as a sunset cloud—a pearl necklace, whose lustrous beads rippled down upon my mourning-dress, their purity and loveliness more wonderful for the contrast.

Jewels for me!

I smiled, looking up at the pale, worn face in the mirror. But I could sell them, and buy what I needed more than jewels. I was putting them back in the drawer when a bit of yellow paper caught my eye. I took it up, unfolding it with languid curiosity. But, oh, the wonder and joy that took away my breath, that set my heart in a tumult! It was Allan's hand, and Allan's heart throbbed through the lines.

"Katherine, dear," he wrote, "I have waited, and hoped, and prayed to see you ever since that terrible night, for it is you only, dear, whom I love—you only whom I hope to make my wife; but I doubted you so much that I tried to test you before I said what I could never unsay. Send me word when I may come to you, and I shall know you have forgiven me, and that I am not over bold to trust in your love, living heart."

Oh, Allan, Allan! Oh, my desolate, lonely life! If I had read those dear words years ago, Allan need never have gone over the sea and would surely never have taken another wife to his bosom. But ah, the bitter mockery, the unavailing sorrow

for what might have been! Heaven forgive me if I grudged that poor dead girl her little year of happiness.

I went out, and walking up and down the shore, climbing about the rocks left bare by the tide, the old strong feelings of youth came back.

The girl that walked there so many years ago, now deplored her wasted life, and now all alive with a newborn joy, was I, and the faded woman who had suffered so much, for the long time counting the years till the end should come, was not I.

I did not mind that the day was growing dark till a fisherman whom I met touched his cap in passing, and said:

"It's going to be a wild night, ma'am!"

Then I looked around. The sky was covered with a pale gray film that grew deeper towards the horizon, where it was touched by gleams of brass-yellow. High up, and hurrying towards the zenith, were a flock of white, wild-looking cirrus clouds; a shadow rested on everything landward; now and then the thin veil that covered the sky would lift for a moment, and the spire of the village church, and the tall crag that loomed over the sea would grow luridly red; under this lowering sky the sea lay black and opaque; afar off there were little specks of white, angry-looking foam; and now, as I looked, the waves began to roll in with a long, slow swell, that showed to what profound depths the waters far out at sea were moved.

The wind increased. All day it had blown with a steady, resistless sweep; now there were short, fitful gusts, that sent the foam swirling high upon the rocks. And ever the surf thundered more hoarsely, and ever more ominously it muttered, as it came rolling up from afar.

"Coming, coming, coming! Coming, coming, coming!"

It came faster and faster, till it blew great guns. The waves rushed up the beach, reaching presently the highest point touched for fifty years. It was easy to guess what sort of work would be done that night.

I went in at last, but I was too nervous and excited to sleep; so I made a great fire, and sat down in its ruddy light and warmth.

The din outside was by this time so great that I could hardly hear myself think.

What with the howling of the wind in the chimney and its reverberations in the great empty house, the clattering of the windows, the creaking of the trees about the house, and the thunder of the waves, which grew louder and louder every moment, it became present awful.

It was about midnight, I think, when a new sound struck across the incoherent roar. I got up, trembling, and went out into the hall.

"What is it, Davis?"

"It is a gun from a ship in distress," said Davis. "She was in the offing at sunset, and must be driving upon the rocks. Heaven help her, for nobody else can."

He was making ready to go out, and so, too, were all the servants. I got some wraps and went with the rest.

Half the village people were on the beach, some sheltering themselves from the wind, in the lee of the fishing-boats that had been left upon the sand, and some clinging to each other for support—the women sobbing and wringing their hands, the men with white faces.

She was close by now—so near that when a flash of lightning broke across the clouds we could see the crew clinging to the sides, and hear now and then a cry for help so agonizing that it made one's heart ache to breaking.

We waited and watched till the suspense grew intolerable.

"If she strikes the rocks," said a gray-haired old fisherman, "she'll go down in a minute; but if she goes upon the beach she may hold together till morning."

Davis came and touched me on the shoulder.

"It's too much for you, Miss Katherine. Won't you please go in? You can't bear it," said my faithful old friend.

And so I went; after giving orders that fires should be kept, and food and restoratives had in readiness, I went back to my room. I must have fallen asleep then, for there was a faint gray light when, at a knock upon the door, I started up.

"If you'd please to come out here, Miss Katherine!"

Davis was flushed with emotion, and he drew his sleeve across his eyes repeatedly.

"What is it, Davis?"

"The ship broke on the beach, Miss—"

"Well?" as he paused. "Has any one been washed ashore?"

"Yes, Miss Katherine."

"How strangely you look, Davis!"

"Miss Katherine, would you come in here?"

He led the way to a little ante-room. A few shawls and cushions had been thrown in a corner of the room, and some one was lying there.

"His face was bruised by a spar, miss, but—"

Davis stopped to draw his sleeve across his eyes again.

I knelt down and lifted up the bit of torn sail that lay over his face. It was Allan's eyes that smiled up at me, Allan's own voice that cried out, all tremulous with joy:

"Oh, Katherine! my darling—my darling!"

And so the faithful sea returned my love to me at last.

A. M. H.

FACETIE.

THE comet, having made its bow to the sun, is now on its way home. Unlike Scotchmen, these nebulous gentry invariably go "back again."—*Judy*.

"DEAR me! when I heard that cabbage had fell a penny a head you could have knocked me down with a feather!"

A BANGAW.—"I say, Bobby, just give us a shove with this 'ere pance on to this 'ere truck, and next time yer runs me in I'll go quiet!"—*Punch*.

A YOUNG lady, writing to a friend, says: "I am not engaged, as you insinuate, but I must confess that I see a cloud above my domestic horizon about as big as a man's hand."

CURIOS FACT.—It has been discovered by a learned aurist that the singing of the kettle on the hob can be best appreciated by those only who have kettle-drums to their ears.—*Fan*.

VERY HARD LINES.

"Well, Kirby, how's business?"
"Middlin', mom, jist middlin'. Some day we das nothing ava, an' others we das twico as mucho!"—*Punch*.

AN Irish jury, recently, after being locked up for six hours, were called out and asked if they had agreed. The foreman replied that there was not the slightest possibility of agreement, even if they remained locked up for ever.

FORRES painted an eagle so naturally, the other day, that when he finished his tail he tip up wing and flew away. The last seen of him he was passing over the city with a flag in his talons. Great artist that Forbes!

IS IT POSSIBLE?—According to a writer in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, quoted in the *Pictorial World*, woman's face is shorter by a tenth than that of man. This statement will come as a surprise to those of us who know, experimentally, what a very long face a woman can pull.—*Punch*.

NOT QUITE SO GREEN.—A grocer was lately fined at the Kensington Petty Sessions for selling preserved green peas which, on analysis, were proved to owe their colour to copper. The seller said that he was assured by the importers that the colouring matter was only essence of spinach. We would rather say that it was essence of gammon.—*Punch*.

TRUE AND FALSE TEETH.

A "Surgeon-Dentist's" advertisement in a daily paper thus commences:

"TEETH.—The best is the cheapest."

Not quite so. The best are (not is) those which nature supplies gratuitously. The cheapest teeth, at their very best, can only be second best.—*Punch*.

"I FEAR," said an Aberdeen minister to his flock, "when I explained to you in my last charity sermon that philanthropy was the love of our species you must have understood me to say species, which may account for the smallness of the collection. You will now prove, I hope, by your present contribution, that you are no longer labouring under the same mistake."

After dinner one day last week, at a Liverpool table-d'hôte, a young man was relating how he had miraculously escaped from a fearful shipwreck. "Yes," said he, "fifteen of my friends were on board. The vessel went down, and they were all lost." "But how," asked a listener, whose interest was painfully excited, "did you manage to escape?" "Oh," was the calm reply, "I was on board another vessel."

THE King of Persia once ordered his vizier to make out a list of all the fools in his dominions. He did so, and put his Majesty's name at the head of them. The king asked him why, and he immediately answered: "Because you entrusted a lac of rupees to men you don't know, to buy horses for you a thousand miles off, and who'll never come back." "Ay, but suppose they come back?" "Then I shall erase your name and insert theirs."

"Five from five leaves how many?" asked the teacher of a little girl of some six years, who had not had many lessons in modern arithmetic. After a moment's reflection she answered, "five." "How do you make that out?" said the teacher. Holding her little hand up, the child said, "Here are five fingers on my right hand, and here are five on the other. Now if I take the five fingers on my left hand away

from the right, won't five remain?" The teacher was puzzled, and thought there might yet be now discoveries in the science of arithmetic.

BLOOD AND IRON.

When a stolid assassin great Bismarck dares fire on, The joy that he's missed him is evidence good That Germany still wants her Chancellor's iron, If Kultham and Co. want her Chancellor's blood. Punch.

A GOOD LISTENER.

Reverend Gentleman: "Well, Tim, did you leave the letter at the squire's?"

Tim: "I did, your riv'rence. I b'lieve they're havin' dinner company to-day—"

Reverend Gentleman (angrily): "What business had you to be listening about? How often have I told you—"

Tim: "Plaze your riv'rence, I only listened with my nose!"—Punch.

AN old farmer employed a son of Erin to work for him on his farm. John was constantly misplacing the end boards in the cart—the front board behind and the tail board in front—which made the old gentleman very irritable. To prevent blunders he painted on both boards a large "B," then calling John to him, and showing him the boards, said, "Now, you blockhead, you need make no mistake, as they are both marked. This" (pointing to one board) "is 'B' for before, and that" (indicating the tail board) "is 'B' for behind," whereupon the old gentleman marched off with great dignity.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT.—A contemporary announces that on the twelfth of July "demonstrations of an unwonted magnitude," in honour of King William and the Battle of the Boyne, were held in Scotland, especially at Glasgow and in Greenock Park. Of course the Orangemen of Scotland are all originally Irish, except in Dundee and other places where marmalade is extensively manufactured from the fruit purveyed by orange merchants. Both Irish and English Orange Boys may occasionally engage in Orange demonstrations by peltin' each other with orange-peel, but no Orange Boys in canary Scotland could be capable of such extravagance as to throw away material which they know might be utilized in compounding a valuable confection.—Punch.

ROUGH ON THE PARSON.—A Scotch parish once had for a minister a good man, remarkable for his benevolent disposition. Meeting one of his parishioners one day he said, "Jeanie, what way do I never see you in the kirk?" "Weel, sir," said Jeanie, "to be plain wi' ye, I hasna a pair of shoon to gang wi'." "A pair o' shoon, Jeanie! Jeanie, I'll not let you stay at home for that; what would a pair cost?" "About four shillings, sir." Putting his hand into his pocket he gave Jeanie the money and went his way. Some time after, meeting her again, he said, "Dear me, Jeanie, I've never seen ye in the kirk yet; what way is that?" "Weel, sir," said Jeanie, "to be plain wi' ye, when the weather's guid, and I has time, I prefer gaun to Dumfriens, to hear Mr. Gillespie." "Oh, indeed, Jeanie, lass, that's the way o't, is't? You might ha' gien me the first day o' the shoon ony way, d'ye no think?"

ROBINSON'S MISTAKE.

ROBINSON's wife having gone to the country, R. writes to an old college friend, named Polley, to come and have a good time. Arrangements scarcely made, when a note arrives from wife's uncle, who is rich, old and a bachelor, to say he is on his way to put up with them for a bit. Plans thus frustrated, Robinson sits down and hurriedly writes three postal cards, namely:

No. 1. (to his uncle)—Dear old boy—delighted to see you. Don't fail to come!

No. 2. (to his wife)—My Dear Angel—That confounded old bore of an uncle of yours is coming to stay. Hurry home.

No. 3. (to his friend)—My dear Polley—No go this time. Wife coming home. Better luck next time. Nil desperandum. Ever yours. R.

In his haste and irritation he turned the cards over on his blotter, and directed No 1 to Polley; No 2 to the uncle; No 3 to his wife. Slow curtain on very awkward tableau.

PLANCHÉ'S STORIES.

An acquaintance of his, he says, who frequently visited Ireland, and generally stopped and dined at the same hotel in Dublin, on his arrival one day received a paper wafered on the looking-glass in the coffee-room, with the following written notice, "Strangers are particularly requested not to give any money to the waiters, as attendance is charged for in the bill." The man who had waited on him at dinner, seeing him reading the notice, said, "Oh, Mister—, sure that doesn't concern you, any-way. Your honour was never made a stranger of in this house."

Planché tells another anecdote about a nobleman whom he met at dinner, and who told him that he had been shooting at a friend's place in the west of Ireland, and that the gamekeeper had indulged in the most exaggerated accounts of the quantity of every description of game upon his master's estate. Nothing that ever ran or flew, that his lordship inquired about, but was asserted by the man could be found by hundreds and thousands. Having, for amusement's sake, exhausted the catalogue of "fur and feathers," probable or improbable, and received the most positive assurance of the existence of every beast or bird in abundance, he asked "Are there any paradoxes?" This was rather a poser; but, after a moment's hesitation, the keeper answered, undaunted, "Bedad, then, your lordship may find two or three of them sometimes on the sand when the tide's out."

A third story concerns a fellow traveller, whom Planché met in Germany, and who was, himself, an Irishman. He was on the box of an Irish mail-coach, on a very cold day, and, observing the driver enveloping his neck in the voluminous folds of an ample comforter, he remarked, "You seem to be taking very good care of yourself, my friend." "Och, to be shure I am, sir," answered the driver, "what's all the world to a man when his wife's a widdy?"

THE JUST JUDGE.

HONoured and pure the old judge sits, With a look of wisdom the whole day long, And lists to the stories that witnesses tell— Stories of right and stories of wrong. Wrinkled his brow and white his hair, And his form is bent with the weight of age, But his eye is undimmed as it quickly runs O'er the law-book's stained and well-thumbed page.

Councillors able and learned expand In eloquent speech the intricate law; They show where the statute is sound and strong, And point out the clause that contains a flaw. And the venerable judge, with a patience grand, Harkens to all that the plodders say, Though all of the sophistry they may use Ne'er turns him from the truth away; For he is a man in whose hands are held The scales of justice, and no power can win Him from his trust, and pull him down From his high estate to the ways of sin. He honours his calling by being just, And he knows that, of all the erring race, No man sinks lower than the unjust judge In the world's esteem and in disgrace.

Therefore, in the hearts of his fellow-men He builds a monument that shall endure As long as the world shall honour right And love all things that are good and pure. C. D.

GEMS.

THE best rule is to be polite to every one, and unless rudeness amounts to positive and intentional insult to take no heed of it. It is the only way to be happy, in a world where every second man is too obtuse, and every third one too ill-tempered, to be pleasantly and frankly courteous.

THE best way to remember a thing is to thoroughly understand it and often to recall it to mind. By reading continually with great attention, and never passing a passage without understanding and considering it well, the memory will be stored with knowledge; and things will occur at times when we want them, though we can never recollect the passages or whence we draw our ideas.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TOOTHPACHE.—Cotton, saturated with a mixture of spirits of nitre and alum, applied to a hollow tooth, is a good remedy.

FRYING FISH.—The fish is practically not fried, but it is boiled in lard. Put sufficient lard in your frying-pau (or oil) that will cover the fish; first boil it till browned sufficiently, then put your fish in; it

must be well dried. Egg and bread-crums may be also sifted over first.

KIPPERED SALMON.—Mix equal parts of salt, ground white pepper and brown sugar, say two table-spoonfuls of each of the above, add a small quantity of cayenne. Split and wipe (not wash) the fish, remove the backbone and rub the mixture in well with the hand. Next day turn it in the pickle that will have formed round it in the night, and turn again every twelve hours. If a small fish, leave it two nights and a day; if a large one, three nights and two days in the pickle are enough to preserve it well, then hang it up in the sun for three or four hours, and it is ready for use. Cut it into slices and fry it in buttered writing paper. A fish 10 lb. weight will require four large spoonfuls of each ingredient. Pike trout or sea trout are excellent done in this manner, but do not keep more than ten days or a fortnight. Another way: Select a red fish, that is, one that has been in fresh water at least a month; split and wipe him perfectly clean, removing the backbone and every particle of blood; rub in well a mixture of equal quantities of salt, brown sugar and black pepper. Let him lie in the pickle he will make from two to three days, according to size, turning each day, and then pressed between two flat stones in some cool place for three days more; then, should the sun shine, hang him in the open air against a wall, with wooden skewers across to keep him flat. Failing the sun, 4 ft. or 5 ft. above the fireplace in the kitchen will do nearly as well where it is warm, but not hot. Let him remain four days, and each day paint him over with a brush dipped in essence of smoke.

STATISTICS.

THE last return shows that the population of Japan amounts to 83,000,000; the country contains 717 districts with 12,000 towns, 76,000 villages, including altogether 7,000,000 of small and large houses, and 98,000 Buddhist temples. The population is divided into 29 princes and princesses, 1,300 noblemen, 1,000,000 peasants; of whom 500,000 are labourers, 800,000 merchants, tradesmen, and shopkeepers.

PAY AND ALLOWANCES OF THE SWISS ARMY.—The new law on the military organization of the army of the Confederation provides that the pay of the different grades shall be as follows:—The commander-in-chief is to receive 50f. a day and forage for six horses; chief of the general staff, 30f. and four horses; war commissary, 30f. and four horses; adjutant-general and general of division, 30f. and four horses; colonel, 25f. and four horses; lieutenant-colonel, 18f. and three horses; major, 14f. and two horses; captain, 10f. and one horse; senior lieutenant, 7f. and one horse; lieutenant 6f. and one horse; secretary of the staff, 6f.; adjutant non-commissioned officer, 3f.; sergeant-major, 2f.; quartermaster, 2f.; cavalry sergeant, 2f.; laboratory sergeant, 2f.; infantry sergeant, 1f.; hospital attendant, 1f.; carrier, 80c.; cavalry corporal, 1f.; other corporals, artillery sergeant, gunsmith, farrier, locksmith, wheelwright, and saddler, 1f. each; aspicer, 80c.; waggoner, guide, and dragoon, 1f.; all other soldiers, 80c.

MISCELLANEOUS.

OUR House of Commons uses half a ton of ice at a sitting, as we are informed upon scientific authority. The sitting process suggests a dubious idea, but the ice is breathed, as it is consumed in cooling the air.

THE Emperor of Russia has invited the Prince Imperial to pay him a visit at St. Peterburg, by way of returning the hospitality which Napoleon III. showed the Czar at Paris during the International Exhibition of 1867.

A YORKSHIRE OAK.—The Cowthorpe Oak, which still throws out leaves, and has a circumference close to the ground of 60ft. and, at 5ft. from the ground, 36ft. 5in., is estimated by Professor Burnett at 1,600 years old.

THE Duke of Northumberland has purchased No. 2, Grosvenor Place, S.W., for a sum of 61,000£, which he will occupy henceforth as a town residence, a portion of the valuable property having been placed there and the remainder sent to Sion House, Isleworth, and Alnwick Castle, Northumberland. It is roughly estimated that the value of the property in question exceeds 300,000£.

THE rails recently removed from round St. Paul's Cathedral being made of Sussex iron, a few miles from Lewes, the Sussex Archaeological Society decided to secure a slice of this ancient industry in the county. Lewes Castle is rented by them, and contains their large and valuable collection of antiquities. The lower entrance to the castle has just been restored, and here a length of the St. Paul's rails, in excellent preservation, has been erected, and forms an interesting link between the present and past.

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
THE GIPSY PEER; OR, A SLAVE OF CIRCUM- STANCES	337
SILVERSTONE'S HEIR; OR, THE MYSTERY OF BLACKROCK TOWER	311
FAIR ANNE OF CLY	344
SPONGE	345
LOVE'S DREAM, AND REALITY; OR, THE HOUSE OF SECRETS	346
THE SWEET SISTERS OF INCHVARA; OR, THE VAMPIRES OF THE GUILLAMORES	349
SEA-WEEDS	332
EXPECTATIONS	332
SCIENCE	334
LOVE'S AGONY	335
FACETIES	336
HOUSEHOLD TREASURES	339
GEMS	339
STATISTICS	339
MISCELLANEOUS	339
LOVE'S DREAM, AND REALITY; OR, THE HOUSE OF SECRETS, COMMENCED IN	576
FAIR ANNE OF CLY, COMMENCED IN	578
SILVERSTONE'S HEIR; OR, THE MYSTERY OF BLACKROCK TOWER, COMMENCED IN	583
THE SWAN SISTERS OF INCHVARA; OR, THE VAMPIRES OF THE GUILLAMORES, COM- MENCED IN	585
EXPECTATIONS, COM- MENCED IN	585

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

D. E.—Inquire at the various booksellers' shops. 2. We do not know.

Brunswick.—We are unable to render you any more assistance.

A CONSTANT READER.—Neither charge nor conditions are necessary.

HELEN B.—It is against our rule to answer correspondents through the post.

J. T. B.—We have repeatedly said we do not answer our correspondents by letter.

ONSEVER W., WILLIAM F., AND BLUE-EYED FLORENCE will be answered next week.

LONELY FANNY.—The colour of the hair is brown. Your other request will be attended to.

ANNIE.—We do not publish the addresses of private individuals in these columns.

AUDREY OLIVE.—The manuscript headed "Married for Money" has been received.

JOHN A.—It is very unadvisable for a man to marry before he attains his twenty first year.

W. H. H.—To help you to disfigure yourself is no part of our duty, and therefore we decline to answer the question.

CITY OF LIVERPOOL.—Try soap and hot water. Put a little soda in the water, and then scrub the articles gently with a nail brush.

DICK STARLIGHT.—It will perhaps be better to consider the matter concluded. As well as we can judge it is improbable your desire will be gratified.

CONSTANCE.—Your lines to your sister are creditable as evidencing the existence of mutual affection, but in other respects they are without merit.

THIRST.—Try Cooper's Effervescent Lozenges. They afford instantaneous relief, and the result of their use will be found to be both pleasant and beneficial.

C. M.—We believe there is a description of slate termed "Duchess," it is, we think, a name applicable rather to size than quality. We never heard of the name as applied to slate.

ANNIE R.—The best remedy for stoutness is exercise and moderation in taking liquid of any kind. But stoutness for the most part is constitutional. The writing is excellent.

E. C. G.—Whatever can sailors have to do with silk mills? On the very face of the letter there is an improbability which relieves us from further attention to the matter.

AN ARTIST.—A lady should wear her engagement ring when she goes to church to be married, but she should not wear it on that finger upon which the wedding-ring will be placed.

Gwendolyn L.—We are unable to answer questions numbers 1 and 2 and can only advise you to consult a surgeon in those matters. We consider your handwriting not suitable for book-keeping.

KATE L.—The lady should not unsought be won, which in ordinary prose means that if the gentleman is not industrious enough to find you out the matter should be allowed to drop.

ANXIOUS MAGGIE.—You can advertise for your missing friend in such local newspapers as you may consider desirable. You should be on your guard against fraud and personation, and be cautious as to the offer of a reward.

HARRY B.—Though the lines "At the Helm" are not good enough for publication they will do very well as a sort of ode from a lover to his sweethearts. We are sure "May" will be highly gratified if you send her a copy.

ELIZABETH.—Judson's Dyes would, we think, answer your purpose admirably. You can procure them in almost every shade of colour at a trifling cost per bottle. We know of nothing that is at once so cheap and so effective.

S. G. C.—Our advice is this: Let the engaged couple immediately begin to make arrangements for their marriage, let the wedding take place and let the happy couple remove to another part of the town to that in which the lady now resides.

X. Y. Z.—We cannot recommend the use of any chemical agent for the purpose of removing hair from the forehead. Of course you can if you like employ the razor for that purpose, but you will remember that such a process requires repetition.

FRANK (Cardiff).—1. A gold watch is a suitable present for a young lady on her 21st birthday. 2. Apply a mustard loof to your throat, if that remedy fails consult a surgeon immediately. But your cold will have left you before you read this.

A. W. F. (Cornwall).—You had better consult some of your fellow workmen on the subject. For if such theorists as we could undertake to show the way to practical men like you, whose proficiency has been attained by years of labour, we should be speedily overwhelmed with communications requesting us to paint the lily and so forth.

A. P. T.—There is a cheap edition of the oratorio

"The Messiah" published by Novello, Berners St, price about half-a-crown. 2. We cannot say. 3. Flirtation is a pleasant recreation when controlled by moderation and discretion—there, that is an answer to your question and a nice phrase for a copybook at the same time.

K. S. B. T.—1. Small coal is frequently utilized by means of water carefully applied after the coal has been placed on the fire, but this process is said to effect injuriously the health of the occupants of the room in which the fire is made. 2. We have no knowledge of the patent about which you inquire.

F. C.—The stanzas "To a Sister" are not, we think, good enough to appear even amongst your own circle. They are consequently very removed from perfection. They are marked by an extravagance of sentiment which renders them, on the whole, nonsensical in spite of an occasional touch of humour.

ANXIUS INQUIRER.—1. If you are wrongfully in possession of land you are liable to be served any day with a writ of ejection. Immediately after you have been served with the writ you should consult a solicitor. 2. Acts of Parliament can be obtained of the Queen's printer, New Street, Gough Square, London, or through the medium of most booksellers.

INA.—Parrots are usually fed on bread and milk. Nuts are given them occasionally by way of a treat. So also are apples and peaches. The food dish should be made of wood or earthenware. Care must be taken that all food is sweet, anything sour is injurious to these birds. The handwriting is somewhat deficient in consciousness, but it is notwithstanding very good.

WOMAN'S WORK.

"Ah, the fault of this womanly labour
Is a lack of persistence and skill."

Madame Theory writes very sadly.

With a strong-minded, masculine quill,

And she shakes her gray coronet sadly;

"Not a painter, engraver, or clerk

In all this long list recommended

I can trust for reliable work."

Ah, wise Madame Theory, listen;

Fairy Godmother's vanished long since,

But the sweet Cinderellas are waiting

The coming of possible Prince.

He is coming! They hear in the distance

The roll of the pumpkin ladanum.

Soon coming! The crystalline slipper

He has hid in his bosom, they know.

Alas! for the woman heart-tender

That still a long outlook must keep

Through the merciless bars of a ledger

For the Prince and his coming to peep,

Till numbers beat their old nature,

And "one" and "one" do not count "two,"

By gentle Love's sophistry figured,

As they used in the school-books to do.

The fair graver's hand is unsteady

With thrill of a tender cares,

That has prophesied rest for her labour,

As well as a true love to bless;

And the deft little hands of composer

Will find how the types better spell

Out the name that she dares not to whisper—

That work she will surely do well.

Ah, I fear, Madame Theory, ever

There still will be lacking the skill

And persistence to make woman worthy

These masculine places to fill;

For a life and its nearest surroundings

May change in the round of a ring,

And the fair falling chance of to-morrow

The Prince and the slipper may bring.

E. L.

LITTLE MARY.—1. The phrase "I thank you" is correct A little too formal perhaps. In use the "I" is generally omitted. 2. Those persons, if any there are, who say "She am" either intend to impress you with a notion of their comic power, or they make a blunder, for, as Lindsey Murray tells us, a verb must agree with its nominative in number and person.

M.—The Sheldonian theatre at Oxford is one of the buildings connected with the university and is not a theatre in the ordinary acceptation of the word. It can contain nearly 4,000 persons and is used for university meetings and occasional concerts; it is the place where the annual commemoration of founders and benefactors is held at which time honorary degrees are granted to distinguished characters.

J. C. C.—It is incorrect to raise your hat to a lady with whom you are not acquainted who happens to be walking with a gentleman whom you know but who merely bows to you. Should your friend stop you and converse with you you might salute the lady in parting. 2. If a lady whom you do not know bows to a lady on your arm you should not salute; such an interchange of courtesies is no affair of yours. 3. There has been published a book on the Manners of Modern Society which is held at which time honorary degrees are granted to distinguished characters.

G. R. B.—This age is too practical for such love-sick verses as you have sent us. In these days, when the case is really hopeless, disappointed lovers of the male sex endure the bitter anguish in silence. When, as in your case, the question of disappointment is comparative, it would be far better to endeavour to obviate the causes of such disappointment than to address her in tones of such abject lamentation. Whatever is the use of telling her "Without thee I must die"? If you must go, go, and end the matter for the present without imposing upon her the fetter of a promise. Whatever of her heart you think you have got is safe enough if you deserve it.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.—1. A woman should at her marriage use the name by which she is generally known at the time. If an illegitimate girl has assumed the name of her supposed father and marries in the name the marriage is good so far as concerns the name. 2. When a woman leaves her husband and takes part of the home with her the husband can recover the things provided they were bought with his money. But if the things are the property of a third person, or if they were purchased out of the earnings of the married woman subsequent to

the passing of the statute 33 and 34 Vict., c. 93, the husband cannot recover them. A husband is not compelled to maintain wife who has left his home.

RED ROSE.—The chief characteristic of the face of the portrait sent by you appears to us to be—goodness. There is not one feature inconsistent with that idea. It is a pretty face also, has lots of brightness, of intelligence, and of good nature. Apparently the face is young and therefore of only partial development, it exhibits, however, promise of some strength of character, of deep and constant affection, and of much usefulness. Should this young lady's lot be fortunately cast amongst worthy people she will probably become the happy wife of some good man whose home will be modelled after the good pattern which has helped to make Old England good and wise, good and great.

W. B.—The answer to your question about the servant meeting with an accident while in the discharge of his duties depends upon the description of servant referred to. But, upon the construction most favourable to you, he was paid enough. It is quite true that if a domestic servant happens to become disabled by accident or illness for the performance of his duties, this does not justify the master in discharging him without such warning or wages as he might otherwise claim. You may be engaged by the week; then if he received a week's wages after the accident he could claim no more. The accident must be taken to be the warning. The mode and time at which the wages were paid appear in this in stand to be outside the case.

FATIGUE.—You should be advised to trust to the natural promptings of your own heart aided by such intelligent powers of observation as you may happen to possess rather than consult such empirical receipts as that for which you have written. Their design is just to amuse a passing hour or to provoke a smile either at impossible pretensions or the facetiousness with which those pretensions are put forth. You must regard them in this way, otherwise your friend must demolish your overweening trust by bringing into play that heavy artillery quotation which reminds us of certain juggling feuds

"That palter with us in a double sense,
That keep the word of promise to our ear
And break it to our hope."

LOVING' NELL, tall, and fair, would like to correspond with a tall, dark young gentleman who is good looking, about twenty, fond of music and society.

M. L., dark, amiable, domesticated, and fond of home, would like to correspond with a tall, fair gentleman about twenty, with a view to matrimony.

JULIA D., fair, good looking, and domesticated, wishes to correspond with a young man who is a steady and able workman, and one who could make her a comfortable home.

THOMAS R., thirty-nine, 5ft. 7in., a seaman in the R.N., fair complexion, blue eyes, good tempered, and fond of home, wishes to correspond with a lady about his own age. She must be affectionate and good tempered.

FLAG JACK, twenty-one, 5ft. 5in., gray eyes, sunburn hair, a signalman in the R.N., would like to correspond with some young woman with a view to matrimony. She must be fond of home, good tempered, and a teetotaler, he being a Good Templar.

TILLY, nineteen, domesticated, good tempered, dark hair and eyes, wishes to correspond with a young man who is in a position to make her a comfortable home. He must be steady and amiable, and one who could make a happy home.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

COAL MINER is responded to by—"Constance," rather tall, fair, of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

CONSTANT JACK by—"Eve," fair, loving, and thinks she will suit him.

TEMPERED JACK by—"Saucy Nell," twenty, medium height, blue eyes, brown hair, good looking, fond of home and children.

TOM by—"Polly," nineteen, brown hair and eyes, fair complexion, and thinks she is able to make his home pleasant and happy. She is good tempered and domesticated.

FAT BOSS by—"Horace," nineteen, tall, fair, and respectively connected; by—"Hamlet," twenty, medium height, fair complexion, with expectations; by—"George Frederick," twenty, 5ft. 4in., a clerk in a banking house, dark complexion, and considered good looking; and by—"John," twenty-two, who will make a loving husband should he be successful in gaining her affections.

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